

Seventeenth-Century Art in Europe



23-1 • Gianlorenzo Bernini ST. TERESA OF ÁVILA IN ECSTASY

Cornaro Chapel, church of Santa Maria della Vittoria, Rome. 1645–1652. Marble, height of the group 11'6" (3.5 m).

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In the church of Santa Maria della Vittoria in Rome, the sixteenth-century Spanish mystic **ST. TERESA OF ÁVILA** (1515–1582, canonized 1622) swoons in ecstasy on a bank of billowing marble clouds (**FIG. 23-1**). A puckish angel tugs open her robe, aiming a gilded arrow at her breast. Gilded bronze rays of supernatural light descend, even as actual light illuminates the figures from a hidden window above. This dramatic scene, created by Gianlorenzo Bernini (1598–1680) between 1645 and 1652, represents a famous vision described with startling physical clarity by Teresa, in which an angel pierced her body repeatedly with an arrow, transporting her to a state of ecstatic oneness with God, charged with erotic associations.

The sculpture is an exquisite example of the emotional, theatrical style perfected by Bernini in response to the religious and political climate in Rome during the period of spiritual renewal known as the Counter-Reformation. Many had seen the Protestant Reformation of the previous century as an outgrowth of Renaissance Humanism with its emphasis on rationality and independent thinking. In response, the Catholic Church took a reactionary, authoritarian position, supported by the new Society of Jesus founded by Ignatius of Loyola (d. 1556, canonized 1622). In the “spiritual

exercises” (1522–1523) initiated by St. Ignatius, Christians were enjoined to use all their senses to transport themselves emotionally as they imagined the events on which they were meditating. They were to feel the burning fires of hell or the bliss of heaven, the lashing of the whips and the flesh-piercing crown of thorns. Art became an instrument of propaganda and also a means of leading the spectator to a reinvigorated Christian practice and belief.

Of course, the arts had long been used to convince or inspire, but nowhere more effectively than by the Catholic Church in the seventeenth century. To serve the educational and evangelical mission of the revitalized and conservative Church, paintings and sculpture had to depict events and people accurately and clearly, following guidelines established by religious leaders. Throughout Catholic Europe, painters such as Rubens and Caravaggio created brilliant religious art under official Church sponsorship. And although today some viewers find this sculpture of St. Teresa uncomfortably charged with sexuality, the Church approved of the depictions of such sensational and supernatural mystical visions. They helped worshipers achieve the emotional state of religious ecstasy that was a goal of the Counter-Reformation.

LEARN ABOUT IT

- 23.1** Explore how the work of Bernini and Caravaggio established a new dramatic intensity, technical virtuosity, and unvarnished naturalism that blossomed into a style we call Baroque that spread across Europe during the seventeenth century.
- 23.2** Examine the development of portraiture, still life, landscape, and genre scenes as major subjects for painting, especially within the prosperous art market of the Netherlands.

- 23.3** Analyze the way that seventeenth-century artists created works that embodied the power and prestige of the monarchy as well as works that furthered the Counter-Reformation agenda of the Roman Catholic Church.
- 23.4** Assess the resurgence of Classicism, especially in the work of seventeenth-century French artists and architects.

“BAROQUE”

The intellectual and political forces set in motion by the Renaissance and Reformation of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries intensified during the seventeenth century. Religious wars continued, although gradually the Protestant forces gained control in the north, where Spain recognized the independence of the Dutch Republic in 1648. Catholicism maintained its primacy in southern Europe, the Holy Roman Empire, and France through the efforts of an energized papacy, aided by the new Society of Jesus, also known as the Jesuit Order (**MAP 23-1**). At the same time, scientific advances compelled people to question their worldview. Of great importance was the growing understanding that the Earth was not the center of the universe, but a planet revolving around the sun. As rulers' economic strength began to slip away, artists found patrons in the Church and the secular state, as well as in the newly confident and prosperous urban middle class. What evolved was a style that art historians have called “Baroque.” The label may be related to the Italian word *barocco*, a jeweler's term for an irregularly shaped pearl—something beautiful, fascinating, and strange.

Baroque art deliberately evokes intense emotional responses from viewers. Dramatically lit, theatrical compositions often combine several media within a single work as artists highlight their technical virtuosity. But the seventeenth century also saw its own version of Classicism, a more moving and dramatic variant of Renaissance ideals and principles featuring idealization based on observation of the material world; balanced (though often asymmetrical) compositions; diagonal movement in space; rich, harmonious colors; and the inclusion of visual references to ancient Greece and Rome. Many seventeenth-century artists sought lifelike depiction of their world in portraiture, **genre paintings** (scenes from everyday life), still life (paintings of inanimate objects such as food, fruit, or flowers), and religious scenes enacted by ordinary people in ordinary settings. Intense emotional involvement, lifelike renderings, and Classical references may exist in the same work, and are all part of the stylistic complexion of the seventeenth century.

The role of viewers also changed. Italian Renaissance painters and patrons had been fascinated with the visual possibilities of perspective and treasured idealism of form and subject which kept viewers at a distance, reflecting intellectually on what they were seeing. Seventeenth-century masters, on the other hand, sought to engage viewers as participants in the work of art, and often reached out to incorporate or activate the world beyond the frame into the nature and meaning of the work itself. In Catholic countries, representations of horrifying scenes of martyrdom or the passionate spiritual life of mystics in religious ecstasy sought to inspire viewers to a reinvigorated faith by making them feel what was going on, not simply by causing them to think about it. In Protestant countries, images of communal parades and city views sought to inspire pride in civic accomplishments. Viewers participated in works of art like audiences in a theater—vicariously but completely—as the work of art drew them visually and emotionally into its orbit. The

seventeenth-century French critic Roger de Piles (1635–1709) described this exchange when he wrote: “True painting ... calls to us; and has so powerful an effect, that we cannot help coming near it, as if it had something to tell us” (Puttfarken, p. 55).

ITALY

Seventeenth-century Italy remained a divided land in spite of a common history, language, and geography. The Kingdom of Naples and Sicily was Spanish; the Papal States crossed the center; Venice maintained its independence as a republic; and the north remained divided among small principalities. Churchmen and their families remained powerful patrons of the arts, especially as they sought to use art in revitalizing the Roman Catholic Church. The Council of Trent (concluded 1563) had set guidelines for Church art that went against the arcane, worldly, and often lascivious trends exploited by Mannerism. The clergy's call for clarity, simplicity, chaste subject matter, and the ability to rouse a very Catholic piety in the face of Protestant revolt found a response in the fresh approaches to subject matter and style offered by a new generation of artists.

ARCHITECTURE AND SCULPTURE IN ROME

A major goal of the Counter-Reformation was the proper embellishment of churches and their settings. Pope Sixtus V (pontificate 1585–1590) had begun the renewal in Rome by cutting long, straight avenues through the city to link the major pilgrimage churches with one another and with the main gates of Rome. Sixtus also ordered open spaces—piazzas—to be cleared in front of major churches, marking each site with an Egyptian obelisk. In a practical vein, he also reopened one of the ancient aqueducts to stabilize the city's water supply. Unchallengeable power and vast financial resources were required to carry out such an extensive plan of urban renewal and to refashion Rome—parts of which had been the victim of rapacity and neglect since the Middle Ages—once more into the center of spiritual and worldly power.

The Counter-Reformation popes had great wealth, although they eventually nearly bankrupted the Church with their building programs. Sixtus began to renovate the Vatican and its library; he completed the dome of St. Peter's and built splendid palaces. The Renaissance ideal of the central-plan church continued to be used for the shrines of saints, but Counter-Reformation thinking called for churches with long, wide naves to accommodate large congregations assembled to hear inspiring sermons as well as to participate in the Mass. In the sixteenth century, the decoration of new churches had been relatively austere, but seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Catholic taste favored opulent and spectacular visual effects to heighten the emotional involvement of worshipers.

ST. PETER'S BASILICA IN THE VATICAN Half a century after Michelangelo had returned St. Peter's Basilica to Bramante's original vision of a central-plan building, Pope Paul V Borghese



MAP 23-1 • SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY EUROPE

Protestantism still dominated northern Europe, while in the south Roman Catholicism remained strong after the Counter-Reformation. The Habsburg empire was now divided into two parts, under separate rulers.

(pontificate 1605–21) commissioned Carlo Maderno (1556–1629) to provide the church with a longitudinal nave and a new façade (**FIG. 23-2**). Construction began in 1607, and everything but the façade bell towers was completed by 1615 (see “St. Peter’s Basilica,” page 653). Rooted in the design of Il Gesù’s façade (see **FIG. 21-40**), Maderno’s façade for St. Peter’s steps forward in three progressively projecting planes: from the corners to the doorways flanking the central entrance area, then the entrance area, then the central doorway itself. Similarly, the colossal orders connecting the first and second stories are flat pilasters at the corners but fully round columns where they flank the doorways. These columns support a continuous entablature that also steps out—following the columns—as it moves toward the central door.

When Maderno died in 1629, Gianlorenzo Bernini (1598–1680), his collaborator of five years, succeeded him as Vatican

architect. Bernini was taught by his father, and part of his training involved sketching the Vatican collection of ancient sculpture, such as *Laocoön and His Sons* (see **FIG. 5-64**), as well as the many examples of Renaissance painting in the papal palace. Throughout his life, Bernini admired antique art and, like other artists of this period, considered himself a Classicist. Today, we not only appreciate his strong debt to the Renaissance tradition but also acknowledge the way he broke through that tradition to develop a new, Baroque style.

When Urban VIII was elected pope in 1623, he unhesitatingly gave the young Bernini the daunting task of designing an enormous bronze baldachin, or canopy, over the high altar of St. Peter’s. The church was so large that a dramatic focus on the altar was essential. The resulting **BALDACCHINO** (**FIG. 23-3**), completed in 1633, stands almost 100 feet high and exemplifies the



23-2 • Carlo Maderno and Gianlorenzo Bernini ST. PETER'S BASILICA AND PIAZZA, VATICAN, ROME
 Maderno, façade, 1607–1626; Bernini, piazza design, c. 1656–1657.

Perhaps only a Baroque artist of Bernini's talents could have unified the many artistic periods and styles that come together in St. Peter's Basilica (starting with Bramante's original design for the building in the sixteenth century). The basilica in no way suggests a piecing together of parts made by different builders at different times but rather presents itself as a triumphal unity of all the parts in one coherent whole.

Baroque objective to create multimedia works, combining architecture and sculpture—and sometimes painting as well—that defy simple categorization. The gigantic corner columns symbolize the union of Christianity and its Jewish tradition—the vine of the Eucharist climbing the twisted columns associated with the Temple of Solomon. They support an entablature with a crowning element topped with an orb (a sphere representing the universe) and a cross (symbolizing the reign of Christ). Figures of angels and *putti* decorate the entablature, which is hung with tasseled panels in imitation of a cloth canopy. This imposing work not only marks the site of the tomb of St. Peter, but also serves as a tribute to Urban VIII and his family, the Barberini, whose emblems—honeybees and suns on the tasseled panels, and laurel leaves on the climbing vines—are prominently displayed.

Between 1627 and 1641, Bernini and several other sculptors, again in multimedia extravaganzas, rebuilt Bramante's crossing piers as giant reliquaries. Statues of SS. Helena, Veronica, Andrew, and Longinus stand in niches below alcoves containing

their relics, to the left and right of the *baldacchino*. Visible through the *baldacchino*'s columns in the apse of the church is another reliquary: the gilded-stone, bronze, and stucco shrine made by Bernini between 1657 and 1666 for the ancient wooden throne thought to have belonged to St. Peter as the first bishop of Rome. The Chair of Peter symbolized the direct descent of Christian authority from Peter to the current pope, a belief rejected by Protestants and therefore deliberately emphasized in Counter-Reformation Catholicism. Above the shrine, a brilliant stained-glass window portrays the Holy Spirit as a dove surrounded by an oval of golden rays. Adoring gilded angels and gilt-bronze rays fan out around the window and seem to extend the penetration of the natural light—and the Holy Spirit—into the apse of the church. The gilding also reflects the light back to the window, creating a dazzling, ethereal effect that the seventeenth century, with its interest in mystics and visions, would equate with the activation of divinity.

At approximately the same time that he was at work on the Chair of Peter, Bernini designed and supervised the building of a



23-3 • Gianlorenzo Bernini BALDACCHINO
St. Peter's Basilica, Vatican, Rome. 1624–1633. Gilt bronze, height approx. 100' (30.48 m). Chair of Peter shrine, 1657–1666; gilt bronze, marble, stucco, and glass. Pier decorations, 1627–1641; gilt bronze and marble.

colonnade to form a huge double piazza in front of the entrance to St. Peter's (see FIG. 23-2). The open space that he had to work with was irregular, and an Egyptian obelisk and a fountain previously installed by Sixtus V had to be incorporated into the overall plan. Bernini's remarkable design frames the oval piazza with two enormous curved porticos, or covered walkways, supported by Tuscan columns. These curved porticos are connected to two straight porticos, which lead up a slight incline to the two ends of the church façade. Bernini characterized his design as the “motherly arms of the Church” reaching out to the world. He had intended to build a third section of the colonnade closing the side of the piazza facing the church so that only after pilgrims had crossed the Tiber River bridge and made their way through narrow streets, would they encounter the enormous open space before the imposing church. This element of surprise would have made the basilica and its setting an even more awe-inspiring vision. The approach today—along the grand avenue of the Via della Conciliazione running from the Tiber to the Basilica—was conceived by Mussolini in 1936 as part of his masterplan to transform Rome into a grand fascist capital.

BERNINI AS SCULPTOR Even after Bernini's appointment as Vatican architect in 1629, he was still able to accept outside commissions by virtue of his large workshop. In fact, he first became famous as a sculptor, and he continued to create sculpture throughout his career, for both the papacy and private clients. A man of many talents, he was also a painter and even a playwright—an interest that dovetailed with his genius for theatrical and dramatic presentation.


Bernini's **DAVID** (FIG. 23-4), made for a nephew of Pope Paul V in 1623, introduced a new type of three-dimensional composition that intrudes forcefully into the viewer's space. The young hero bends at the waist and twists far to one side, ready to launch the lethal rock at Goliath. Unlike Donatello's sassy boy (see FIG. 20-14) and Verrocchio's poised and proud adolescent (see FIG. 20-34)—both already victorious—or Michelangelo's pensive young man contemplating the task ahead (see FIG. 21-10), Bernini's more mature David, with his lean, sinewy body, tightly clenched mouth, and straining muscles, is all tension, action, and determination. By creating a twisting figure caught in movement, Bernini




23-4 • Gianlorenzo Bernini DAVID
1623. Marble, height 5'7" (1.7 m). Galleria Borghese, Rome.



23-5 • Gianlorenzo Bernini CORNARO CHAPEL, CHURCH OF SANTA MARIA DELLA VITTORIA, ROME
1642–1652.

 **Read** the document related to Gianlorenzo Bernini on myartslab.com

 **Watch** an architectural simulation about the Cornaro Chapel on myartslab.com

In the center of the chapel and framed by columns in the huge oval niche above the altar, Bernini's marble group *St. Teresa of Ávila in Ecstasy* (see FIG. 23-1) represents a vision described by the Spanish mystic in which an angel pierced her body repeatedly with an arrow, transporting her to a state of indescribable pain, religious ecstasy, and a sense of oneness with God. St. Teresa and the angel, who seem to float upward on clouds, are cut from a heavy mass of solid marble supported on a seemingly drifting pedestal that was fastened by hidden metal bars to the chapel wall. Bernini's skill at capturing the movements and emotions of these figures is matched by his virtuosity in simulating different textures and colors in the pure white medium of marble; the angel's gauzy, clinging draperies seem silken in contrast with Teresa's heavy woolen

monastic robe. Bernini effectively used the configuration of the garment's folds to convey the saint's swooning, sensuous body beneath, even though only Teresa's face, hands, and bare feet are actually visible.

From 1642 until 1652, Bernini worked on the decoration of the funerary chapel of Venetian cardinal Federigo Cornaro (FIG. 23-5) in the Roman church of Santa Maria della Vittoria, designed by Carlo Maderno earlier in the century. The Cornaro family chapel was dedicated to the Spanish saint Teresa of Ávila, canonized only 20 years earlier. Bernini designed it as a rich and theatrical setting for the portrayal of a central event in Teresa's life. He covered the walls with multicolored marble panels and crowned them with a projecting cornice supported by marble pilasters.

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Kneeling against what appear to be balconies on both sides of the chapel are marble portrait sculptures of Federigo, his deceased father (a Venetian doge), and six cardinals of the Cornaro family. The figures are informally posed and naturalistically portrayed. Two read from their prayer books, others exclaim at the miracle taking place in the light-infused realm above the altar, and one leans out from his seat, apparently to look at someone entering the chapel—perhaps the viewer, whose space these figures share. Bernini's intent was not to produce a spectacle for its own sake,

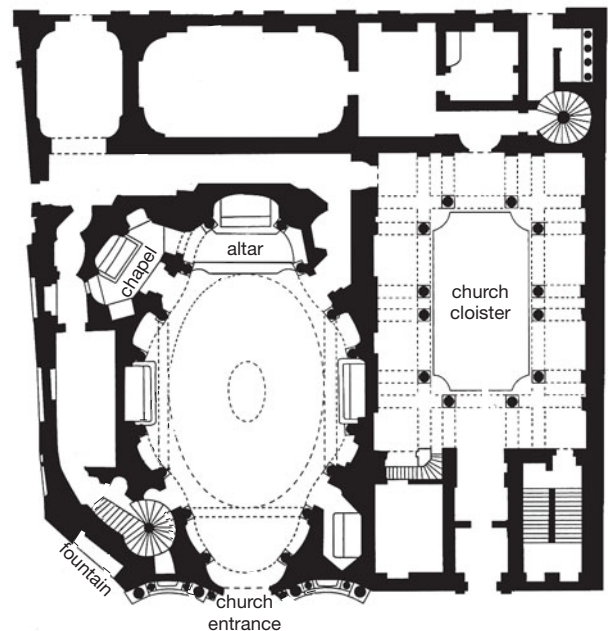
but to capture a critical, dramatic moment at its emotional and sensual height, and by doing so guide viewers to identify totally with the event—and perhaps be transformed in the process.

BORROMINI'S CHURCH OF SAN CARLO The intersection of two of the wide, straight avenues created by Pope Sixtus V inspired city planners to add a special emphasis, with fountains marking each of the four corners of the crossing. In 1634, Trinitarian monks decided to build a new church at the site and awarded the commission for San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane (St. Charles at the Four Fountains) to Francesco Borromini (1599–1667). Borromini, a nephew of architect Carlo Maderno, had arrived in Rome in 1619 from northern Italy to enter his uncle's

workshop. Later, he worked under Bernini's supervision on the decoration of St. Peter's, and some details of the *Baldacchino*, as well as its structural engineering, are now attributed to him, but San Carlo was his first independent commission. Unfinished at Borromini's death, the church was nevertheless completed according to his design.

SAN CARLO ALLE QUATTRO FONTANE stands on a narrow piece of land, with one corner cut off to accommodate one of the fountains that give the church its name (FIG. 23-6). To fit the irregular site, Borromini created an elongated central-plan interior space with undulating walls. Robust pairs of columns support a massive entablature, over which an oval dome, supported on pendentives, seems to float (FIG. 23-7). The coffers (inset panels in geometric shapes) filling the interior of the oval-shaped dome form an eccentric honeycomb of crosses, elongated hexagons, and octagons. These coffers decrease sharply in size as they approach the apex, or highest point, where the dove of the Holy Spirit hovers in a climax that brings together the geometry used in the chapel: oval, octagon, circle, and—very important—a triangle, symbol of the Trinity as well as of the church's patrons. The dome appears to be shimmering and inflating—almost floating up and away—thanks to light sources placed in the lower coffers and the lantern.

It is difficult today to appreciate how audacious Borromini's design for this small church was. He abandoned the modular, additive system of planning taken for granted by every architect since Brunelleschi. He worked instead from an overriding geometrical scheme, as a Gothic architect might, subdividing modular units to



23-6 • Francesco Borromini FAÇADE (A) AND PLAN (B) OF THE CHURCH OF SAN CARLO ALLE QUATTRO FONTANE
Rome. 1638–1667.



23-7 • Francesco Borromini VIEW INTO THE DOME OF THE CHURCH OF SAN CARLO ALLE QUATTRO FONTANE
Rome. 1638–1667.

obtain more complex, rational shapes. For example, the elongated, octagonal plan of San Carlo is composed of two triangles set base to base along the short axis of the plan (see FIG. 23-6B). This diamond shape is then subdivided into secondary triangular units made by calculating the distances between what will become the concave centers of the four major and five minor niches. Yet Borromini's conception of the whole is not medieval. The chapel is dominated horizontally by a Classical entablature that breaks any surge upward toward the dome. Borromini's treatment of the architectural elements as if they were malleable was also unprecedented. His contemporaries understood immediately what an extraordinary innovation the church represented; the Trinitarian monks who had commissioned it received requests for plans from visitors from all over Europe. Although Borromini's innovative work had little impact on the architecture of Classically minded Rome, it was widely imitated in northern Italy and beyond the Alps.

Borromini's design for San Carlo's façade (see FIG. 23-6A), executed more than two decades later, was as innovative as his planning of the interior. He turned the building's front into an

undulating, sculpture-filled screen punctuated with large columns and deep concave and convex niches that create dramatic effects of light and shadow. Borromini also gave his façade a strong vertical thrust in the center by placing over the tall doorway a statue-filled niche, then a windowed niche covered with a canopy, then a giant, forward-leaning cartouche held up by angels carved in such high relief that they appear to hover in front of the wall. The entire composition is crowned with a balustrade broken by the sharply pointed frame of the cartouche. As with the design of the building itself, Borromini's façade was enthusiastically imitated in northern Italy and especially in northern and eastern Europe.

PAINTING

Painting in seventeenth-century Italy followed one of two principal paths: the ordered Classicism of the Carracci or the dramatic naturalism of Caravaggio. Although the leading exponents of these paths were northern Italians—the Carracci family was from Bologna, and Caravaggio was born in or near Milan—they were all eventually drawn to Rome, the center of power and patronage. The Carracci family, like Caravaggio, were schooled in northern Italian Renaissance traditions, with its emphasis on *chiaroscuro*, as well as in Venetian color and *sfumato*. The Carracci quite consciously rejected the artifice of the Mannerist style and fused their northern roots with the central Italian High Renaissance insistence on line (*disegno*), compositional structure, and figural solidity. They looked to Raphael, Michelangelo, and antique Classical sculpture for their ideal figural types and their expressive but decorous compositions. Caravaggio, on the other hand, satisfied the Baroque demand for drama and clarity by developing realism in a powerful new direction. He painted people he saw in the world around him—even the lowlife of Rome—

and worked directly from models without elaborate drawings and compositional notes. Unlike the Carracci, he claimed to ignore the influence of the great masters so as to focus steadfastly on a sense of immediacy and invention.

THE CARRACCI The brothers Agostino (1557–1602) and Annibale Carracci (1560–1609) and their cousin Ludovico (1555–1619) shared a studio in Bologna. As their re-evaluation of the High Renaissance masters attracted interest among their peers, they opened their doors to friends and students and then, in 1582, founded an art academy, where students drew from live models and studied art theory, Renaissance painting, and antique Classical sculpture. The Carracci placed a high value on accurate drawing, complex figure compositions, complicated narratives, and technical expertise in both oil and fresco painting. During its short life, the academy had an impact on the development of the arts—and art education—through its insistence on both life drawing (to achieve naturalism) and aesthetic theory (to achieve artistic harmony).

In 1595, Annibale was hired by Cardinal Odoardo Farnese to decorate the principal rooms of his family's immense Roman palace. In the long *galleria* (gallery), to celebrate the wedding of Duke Ranuccio Farnese of Parma to the niece of the pope, the artist was requested to paint scenes of love based on Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (FIG. 23-8). Undoubtedly, Annibale and Agostino, who assisted him, felt both inspiration and competition from the important

Farnese collection of antique sculpture exhibited throughout the palace.

The primary image, set in the center of the vault, is *The Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne*, a joyous procession celebrating the wine god Bacchus's love for Ariadne, whom he rescued after her lover, Theseus, abandoned her on the island of Naxos. Annibale combines the great northern Italian tradition of ceiling



23-8 • Annibale Carracci CEILING OF GALLERY, PALAZZO FARNESE
Rome. 1597–1601.
Fresco, approx. 68' × 21' (20.7 × 6.4 m).



23-9 • Caravaggio BACCHUS
1595–1596. Oil on canvas, 37" × 33½" (94 × 85.1 cm). Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence.

painting—seen in the work of Mantegna and Correggio (see FIGS. 20–32, 21–22)—with his study of central Italian Renaissance painters and the Classical heritage of Rome. Annibale organized his complex theme by using illusionistic devices to create multiple levels of reality. Painted imitations of gold-framed easel paintings called *quadri riportati* (“transported paintings”) appear to “rest” on the actual cornice of the vault and overlap “bronze” medallions that are flanked, in turn, by realistically colored *ignudi*, dramatically lit from below. The viewer is invited to compare the warm flesh tones of these youths, and their lifelike poses, with the more idealized “painted” bodies in the framed scenes next to them. Above, paintings of stucco-colored sculptures of herms (plain shafts topped by human torsos) twist and turn as they support the painted framework of the vault, exposing a variety of feelings with their expressions and seemingly communicating with one another. Many of Annibale’s ideas are inspired by motifs in Michelangelo’s Sistine Chapel ceiling (see FIG. 21–12). The figure types, true to their source, are heroic, muscular, and drawn with precise anatomical accuracy.

But instead of Michelangelo’s cool illumination and intellectual detachment, the Carracci ceiling glows with a warm light that recalls the work of the Venetian painters Titian and Veronese, and seems buoyant with optimism and lively engagement.

The ceiling was highly admired, famous from the moment it was finished. The proud Farnese family generously allowed young artists to sketch the figures there, so that Carracci’s masterpiece influenced Italian art well into the following century.

CARAVAGGIO Michelangelo Merisi (1571–1610), known as “Caravaggio” after his family’s home town in Lombardy, introduced a powerfully frank realism and dramatic, theatrical lighting and gesture to Italian Baroque art. The young painter brought an interest, perhaps a specialization, in still-life painting with him when he arrived in Rome from Milan late in 1592 and found studio work as a specialist painter of fruit and vegetables. When he began to work on his own, he continued to paint still lifes but also began to include half-length figures with them. By this time,

his reputation had grown to the extent that an agent offered to market his pictures.

Caravaggio painted for a small, sophisticated circle associated with the household of art patron Cardinal del Monte, where the artist was invited to reside. His subjects from this early period of the 1590s include not only still lifes but also genre scenes featuring fortune-tellers, cardsharps, and glamorous young men dressed as musicians or mythological figures. The **BACCHUS** of 1595–1596 (**FIG. 23-9**) is among the most polished of these early works. Caravaggio seems to have painted exactly what he saw, reproducing the “farmer’s tan” of those parts of this partially dressed youth’s skin—hand and face—that have been exposed to the sun, as well as the dirt under his fingernails. The figure himself is strikingly androgynous. Made up with painted lips and smoothly arching eyebrows, he seems to offer the viewer the gorgeous goblet of wine held delicately in his left hand, while fingering the black bow that holds his loose clothing together at the waist. Is this a provocative invitation to an erotic encounter or a young actor outfitted for the role of Bacchus, god of wine? Does the juxtaposition of the youth’s invitation with a still life of rotting fruit transform this into an image about the transitory nature of sensual pleasure, either admonishing viewers to avoid sins of the flesh or encouraging them to enjoy life’s pleasures while they can? The ambiguity seems to make the painting even more provocative.

Most of Caravaggio’s commissions after 1600 were religious, and reactions to them were mixed. On occasion, patrons rejected his powerful, sometimes brutal, naturalism as unsuitable to the subject’s dignity. Critics differed as well. An early critic, the Spaniard Vicente Carducho, wrote in his *Dialogue on Painting* (Madrid, 1633) that Caravaggio was an “omen of the ruin and demise of painting” because he painted “with nothing but nature before him, which he simply copied in his amazing way” (Enggass and Brown, pp. 173–174). Others recognized him as a great innovator who reintroduced realism into art and developed new, dramatic lighting effects. Seventeenth-century art historian Giovanni Bellori described Caravaggio’s painting as

... reinforced throughout with bold shadows and a great deal of black to give relief to the forms. He went so far in this manner of working that he never brought his figures out into the daylight, but placed them in the dark brown atmosphere of a closed room, using a high light that descended vertically over the principal parts of the bodies while leaving the remainder in shadow in order to give force through a strong contrast of light and dark.... (Bellori, *Lives of the Painters*, Rome, 1672, in Enggass and Brown, p. 79)

Caravaggio’s approach has been likened to the preaching of Filippo Neri (1515–1595), the Counter-Reformation priest and mystic who founded a Roman religious group called the Congregation of the Oratory. Neri, called the Apostle of Rome and later canonized, focused his missionary efforts on ordinary people for

whom he strove to make Christian history and doctrine understandable and meaningful. Caravaggio, too, interpreted his religious subjects directly and dramatically, combining intensely observed figures, poses, and expressions with strongly contrasting effects of light and color. His knowledge of Lombard painting, where the influence of Leonardo was strong, must have facilitated his development of the technique now known as **tenebrism**, in which forms emerge from a dark background into a strong light that often falls from a single source outside the painting. The effect is that of a theatrical spotlight.

One of Caravaggio’s first religious commissions—paintings for the Contarelli Chapel in the French community’s church of St. Louis (San Luigi dei Francesi)—included *The Calling of St. Matthew*, painted about 1599–1600 (see “Caravaggio in the Contarelli Chapel,” page 724). The subject is conversion, a common Counter-Reformation theme. Jesus calls Levi, the tax collector, to join his apostles (Matthew 9:9; Mark 2:14). Levi—who will become St. Matthew—sits at a table, counting or collecting money, surrounded by elegant young men in plumed hats, velvet doublets, and satin shirts. Nearly hidden behind the back of a beckoning apostle—probably St. Peter—at the right, the gaunt-faced Jesus points dramatically at Levi with a gesture that is repeated in the presumed (other than Jesus, identities are not certain here) tax collector’s own surprised response of pointing to himself, as if to say, “Who, me?” An intense raking light enters the painting from upper right, as if it were coming from the chapel’s actual window above the altar to spotlight the important features of this darkened scene. Viewers encountering the painting obliquely across the empty space of the chapel interior seem to be witnessing the scene as it is occurring, elevated on a recessed stage opening through the wall before them.

The emotional power of Caravaggio’s theatrical approach to sacred narrative is nowhere more evident than in his rendering of **THE CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL** for the Cerasi Chapel in Santa Maria del Popolo (**FIG. 23-12**). This is one of two paintings commissioned for this chapel in 1600; the other portrayed the Crucifixion of St. Peter. The first pair was rejected when Caravaggio delivered them, and they were acquired by a private collector (see also “Caravaggio in the Contarelli Chapel,” page 724). This second version of Paul’s conversion is direct and simple. Caravaggio focuses on Paul’s internal involvement with a pivotal moment, not its external cause. There is no indication of a heavenly apparition, only Paul’s response to it. There is no clear physical setting, only mysterious darkness. And Paul’s experience is personal. Whereas he has been flung from his horse and threatens to tumble into the viewers’ own space—arms outstretched and legs akimbo, bathed in a strong spotlight—the horse and groom behind him seem oblivious to Paul’s experience. The horse actually takes up more space in the painting than the saint, and the unsettling position of its lifted foreleg, precariously poised over the sprawled body of Paul, adds further tension to an already charged presentation.

As soon as he had established himself as an up-and-coming artist during the 1590s, Caravaggio turned to a series of important commissions for religious paintings in the chapels of Roman churches. Unlike in the Renaissance, where frescos were applied directly to the walls, Caravaggio produced large oil paintings on canvas in his studio, only later installing them within the chapels to form coordinated ensembles. Several such installations survive, giving us the precious opportunity to experience the paintings as Caravaggio and his patrons intended. One of these intact programs, in the **CONTARELLI CHAPEL** of San Luigi dei Francesi (**FIG. 23-10**), was Caravaggio's earliest religious commission in Rome, perhaps obtained through the efforts of Cardinal del Monte, who had supported the artist through the 1590s.

This church served the French community in Rome, and the building itself was constructed between 1518 and 1589, its completion made possible by the patronage of Catherine de' Medici, queen of France. The chapel Caravaggio decorated was founded in 1565 by Mathieu Cointrel—Matteo Contarelli—a French noble at the papal court who would serve as a financial administrator under Gregory XIII (pontificate 1572–1585). Although earlier artists had been called on to provide paintings for the chapel, it was only after Contarelli's death in 1585 that the executors of his will brought the decoration to completion, hiring Giuseppe Cesare in 1591

to paint the ceiling frescos, and Caravaggio in 1599 to provide paintings of scenes from the life of the patron's patron saint: **THE CALLING OF ST. MATTHEW** on the left wall (**FIG. 23-11**) and *The Martyrdom of St. Matthew* on the right (not visible in **FIG. 23-10**), both installed in July 1600.

The commissioning document was explicit, requiring the artist to show, in *The Calling of St. Matthew*, the saint rising from his seat to follow Christ in ministry. But Caravaggio was never very good at following the rules. Among the group of smartly dressed Romans who form Matthew's circle of cohorts seated at the left, no one rises to leave. Art historians have

not even been able to agree on which figure is Matthew. Most identify him with a bearded man in the center, interpreting his pointing gesture as a self-referential, questioning response to Jesus' call. But some see Matthew in the figure hunched over the scattered coins at far left, seemingly unmoved by Jesus' presence. In this case, the bearded figure's pointing would question whether this bent-over colleague was the one Jesus sought. The painting is marked by mystery, not by the clarity sought by Counter-Reformation guidelines.

In February 1602, Caravaggio received a second commission for the Contarelli Chapel, this time for a painting over the altar



23-10 • CONTARELLI CHAPEL, SAN LUIGI DEI FRANCESI
Rome. Paintings by Caravaggio 1599–1602.

showing St. Matthew, accompanied by his angelic symbol and writing his Gospel. It was to be completed within three months, but Caravaggio did not receive payment for the picture until September of that year, and the painting he delivered was rejected. The clergy considered Caravaggio's rendering of the saint unacceptably crude and common, his

cross-legged pose uncouth and unnecessarily revealing. The fleshiness of the angel, who sidles cozily up to Matthew, was judged inappropriately risqué. In short, the painting was inconsistent with guidelines for saintly decorum set for artists by the Council of Trent. Caravaggio had to paint a second, more decorous altarpiece for the chapel

(seen in FIG. 23-10), with a nobler Matthew and a more distant angel. The rejected version was snapped up by Roman collector Vincenzo Giustiniani, who actually paid for the replacement in order to acquire the more sensational original. Unfortunately, this first painting was destroyed in the 1945 bombing of Berlin during World War II.




23-11 • Caravaggio THE CALLING OF ST. MATTHEW

Contarelli Chapel, church of San Luigi dei Francesi, Rome. 1599–1600. Oil on canvas, 10'7½" × 11'2" (3.24 × 3.4 m).



23-12 • Caravaggio **THE CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL**

Cerasi Chapel, Santa Maria del Popolo, Rome.
c. 1601. Oil on canvas, 7'6" × 5'8" (2.3 × 1.75 m).

 [Read](#) the document related to Caravaggio on myartslab.com

Despite the great esteem in which Caravaggio was held by some, especially the younger generation of artists, his violent temper repeatedly got him into trouble. During the last decade of his life, he was frequently arrested, initially for minor offenses such as carrying arms illegally or street brawling. But in May of 1606 he killed a man in a duel fought over a disputed tennis match and had to flee Rome as a fugitive under a death sentence. He supported himself while on the run by painting in Naples, Malta, and Sicily. The Knights of Malta awarded him the cross of their religious and military order in July 1608, but in October he was imprisoned for insulting one of their number, and again he escaped and fled. Caravaggio died on July 18, 1610, just short of his 39th birthday, of a fever contracted during a journey back to Rome where he expected to be pardoned of his capital offense. Caravaggio's unvarnished realism and tenebrism influenced nearly every important European artist of the seventeenth century.

ARTEMISIA GENTILESCHI One of Caravaggio's most brilliant Italian followers was Artemisia Gentileschi (1593–c. 1652/1653), whose international reputation helped spread the Caravaggesque style beyond Rome. Artemisia first studied and worked under her father, Orazio, one of the earliest followers of Caravaggio. In 1616, she moved from Rome to Florence, where she worked for Grand Duke Cosimo II de' Medici and was elected, at the age of 23, to the Florentine Academy of Design.

One of her most famous paintings, and a clear example of her debt to Caravaggio's tenebrism and naturalism, is the painting **JUDITH BEHEADING HOLOFERNES** (FIG. 23-13), which she gave to Cosimo II shortly before she left Florence to return to Rome in 1620. The subject is drawn from the biblical book of Judith, which recounts the story of the destructive invasion of Judah by the Assyrian general Holofernes, when the brave and beautiful Jewish widow Judith risked her life to save her people. Using her charm to gain Holofernes' trust, Judith enters his tent with her maidservant while he is drunk and beheads him with his own sword. Gentileschi emphasizes the grisly facts of this heroic act, as the women struggle to subdue the terrified Holofernes while blood spurts wildly from the severing of his jugular. The artist's dramatic spotlighting and a convergence of compositional diagonals rivet our attention on the most sensational aspects of the scene pushed toward us in the foreground. Throughout her life, Gentileschi painted many such images of heroic biblical women, which art historians have interpreted in relation to her own struggle to claim her rightful place in an art world dominated by overpowering men.



**23-13 • Artemisia
Gentileschi JUDITH
BEHEADING
HOLOFERNES**

c. 1619–20. Oil on canvas,
6'6³/₈" × 5'4" (1.99 × 1.63 m).
Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence.

 **Read** the document
related to Artemisia
Gentileschi on
myartslab.com

BAROQUE CEILINGS: CORTONA AND GAULLI Theatricality, intricacy, and the opening of space reached an apogee in Baroque ceiling decoration—complex constructions combining architecture, painting, and stucco sculpture. These grand illusionistic projects were carried out on the domes and vaults of churches, civic buildings, palaces, and villas, and went far beyond even Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel ceiling (see FIG. 21-11) or Correggio's dome at Parma (see FIG. 21-22). Baroque ceiling painters sought the drama of an immeasurable heaven that extended into vertiginous zones far beyond the limits of High Renaissance taste. To achieve this, they employed the system of *quadratura* (literally, “squaring” or “gridwork”): an architectural setting painted in meticulous perspective and usually requiring that it be viewed from a specific spot to achieve the desired effect of soaring space. The resulting viewpoint is called *di sotto in sù* (“from below to above”), which we first saw, in a limited fashion, in Mantegna's ceiling in Mantua (see FIG. 20-32).

Because it required such careful calculation, figure painters usually had specialists in *quadratura* paint the architectural frame for them.

Pietro Berrettini (1596–1669), called “Pietro da Cortona” after his hometown, carried the development of the Baroque ceiling away from Classicism into a more strongly unified and illusionistic direction. Trained in Florence and inspired by Veronese's ceiling in the Doge's Palace, which he saw on a trip to Venice in 1637, the artist was commissioned in the early 1630s by the Barberini family of Pope Urban VIII to decorate the ceiling of the audience hall of their Roman palace.

Pietro da Cortona's great fresco **THE GLORIFICATION OF THE PAPACY OF URBAN VIII** became a model for a succession of Baroque illusionistic palace ceilings throughout Europe (FIG. 23-14). He structured his mythological scenes around a vault-like skeleton of architecture, painted in *quadratura*, that appears to be attached to the actual cornice of the room. But in contrast



23-14 • Pietro da Cortona THE GLORIFICATION OF THE PAPACY OF URBAN VIII

Ceiling in the Gran Salone, Palazzo Barberini, Rome. 1632–1639. Fresco.

Divine Providence (in gold against an open sky) gestures toward three giant bees surrounded by a huge laurel wreath (both Barberini emblems) carried by Faith, Hope, and Charity. Immortality offers a crown of stars, while other figures present the crossed keys and the triple-tiered crown of the papacy. Around these figures are scenes of Roman gods and goddesses, who demonstrate the pope's wisdom and virtue by triumphing over the vices. So complex was the imagery that a guide gave visitors an explanation, and one member of the household published a pamphlet, still in use today, explaining the painting.

The most spectacular of all illusionistic Baroque ceilings is Giovanni Battista Gaulli's **THE TRIUMPH OF THE NAME OF JESUS AND FALL OF THE DAMNED** (FIG. 23-15), which fills the vault of the Jesuit church Il Gesù (see FIG. 21-40). In the 1560s, Giacomo da Vignola had designed an austere interior for Il Gesù, but when the Jesuits renovated their church a century later, they commissioned a religious allegory to cover the nave's plain ceiling. Gaulli (1639–1709) designed and executed the spectacular illusion between 1672 and 1685, fusing sculpture and painting to eliminate any appearance of architectural division.

to Annibale Carracci's neat separations and careful *quadro riportato* framing (see FIG. 23-8), Pietro's figures weave in and out of their setting in active and complex profusion; some rest on the actual cornice, while others float weightlessly against the sky. Instead of Annibale's warm, nearly even light, Pietro's dramatic illumination, with its bursts of brilliance alternating with deep shadows, fuses the ceiling into a dense but unified whole.

The subject is an elaborate allegory of the virtues of the pope. Just below the center of the vault, seated at the top of a pyramid of clouds and figures personifying Time and the Fates,

It is difficult to sort carved three-dimensional figures from the painted imitations, and some paintings are on real panels that extend over the actual architectural frame. Gaulli, who arrived in Rome from Genoa in 1657, had worked in his youth for Bernini, from whom he absorbed a taste for drama and multimedia effects. The elderly Bernini, who worshiped daily at Il Gesù, may well have offered his personal advice to his former assistant, and Gaulli was certainly familiar with other illusionistic paintings in Rome as well, including Pietro da Cortona's Barberini ceiling (see FIG. 23-14).



23-15 • Giovanni Battista Gaulli THE TRIUMPH OF THE NAME OF JESUS AND FALL OF THE DAMNED

Vault of the church of Il Gesù, Rome. 1672–1685. Fresco with stucco figures.

Gaulli's astonishing creation went beyond anything that had preceded it in unifying architecture, sculpture, and painting. Every element is dedicated to creating the illusion that clouds and angels have descended through an opening in the top of the church into

the upper reaches of the nave. The extremely foreshortened figures are projected as if seen from below, and the whole composition is focused off-center on the golden aura around the letters IHS, the monogram of Jesus and the insignia of the Jesuits. The subject is,

in fact, the Last Judgment, with the elect rising joyfully toward the name of God and the damned plummeting through the ceiling toward the nave floor. The sweeping extension of the work into the nave space, the powerful appeal to the viewer's emotions, and the near-total unity of the multimedia visual effect—all hallmarks of Italian Baroque—were never surpassed.

SPAIN

When the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V abdicated in 1556, he left Spain and its American colonies, as well as the Netherlands, Burgundy, Milan, and the Kingdom of Naples and Sicily to his son Philip II and the Holy Roman Empire (Germany and Austria) to his brother Ferdinand. Ferdinand and the Habsburg emperors who succeeded him ruled their territories from Vienna in Austria, but much of German-speaking Europe remained divided into small units in which local rulers decided on the religion of their territory. Catholicism prevailed in southern and western Germany and in Austria, while the north was Lutheran.

The Spanish Habsburg kings Philip III (r. 1598–1621), Philip IV (r. 1621–1665), and Charles II (r. 1665–1700) reigned over a weakening empire. After repeated local rebellions, Portugal re-established its independence in 1640. The Kingdom of Naples remained in a constant state of unrest. After 80 years of war, the Protestant northern Netherlands—which had formed the United Provinces—gained independence in 1648. Amsterdam grew into one of the wealthiest cities in Europe, and the Dutch Republic became an increasingly serious threat to Spanish trade and colonial possessions. The Catholic southern Netherlands (Flanders) remained under Spanish and then Austrian Habsburg rule.

What had seemed an endless flow of gold and silver from the Americas to Spain diminished, as precious-metal production in Bolivia and Mexico lessened. Agriculture, industry, and trade at home also suffered. As they tried to defend the Roman Catholic Church and their empire on all fronts, the Spanish kings squandered their resources and finally went bankrupt in 1692. Nevertheless, despite the decline of the Habsburgs' Spanish empire, seventeenth-century writers and artists produced some of the greatest Spanish literature and art, and the century is often called the Spanish Golden Age.

PAINTING IN SPAIN'S GOLDEN AGE

The primary influence on Spanish painting in the fifteenth century had been the art of Flanders; in the sixteenth, it had been the art of Florence and Rome. Seventeenth-century Spanish painting, profoundly influenced by Caravaggio's powerfully dramatic art, was characterized by an ecstatic religiosity

combined with realistic surface detail that emerges from the deep shadows of tenebrism.

JUAN SÁNCHEZ COTÁN Late in the sixteenth century, Spanish artists developed a significant interest in paintings of artfully arranged objects rendered with intense attention to detail. Juan Sánchez Cotán (1561–1627) was one of the earliest painters of these pure still lifes in Spain. In **STILL LIFE WITH QUINCE, CABBAGE, MELON, AND CUCUMBER** (FIG. 23-16), of about 1602, he contrasts the irregular, curved shapes of the fruits and vegetables with the angular geometry of their setting. His precisely ordered subjects—two of which are suspended from strings—form a long, sagging arc from the upper left to the lower right. The fruits and vegetables appear within a *cantarero* (primitive larder), but it is unclear why they have been arranged in this way. Set in a strong light against impenetrable darkness, this highly artificial arrangement of strikingly lifelike forms suggests not only a fascination with spatial ambiguity, but also a contemplative sensibility and interest in the qualities of objects that look forward to the work of Zurbarán and Velázquez.

JOSEPE DE RIBERA Josepe (or José) de Ribera (c. 1591–1652) was born in Seville but studied in Rome and settled in Spanish-ruled Naples; in Italy, he was known as “Lo Spagnoletto” (“the Little Spaniard”). He combined the Classical and Caravaggesque styles he had learned in Rome to create a new Neapolitan—and eventually Spanish—style. Ribera became the link extending



23-16 • Juan Sánchez Cotán STILL LIFE WITH QUINCE, CABBAGE, MELON, AND CUCUMBER
c. 1602. Oil on canvas, 27 $\frac{1}{8}$ " × 33 $\frac{1}{4}$ " (68.8 × 84.4 cm). San Diego Museum of Art.
Gift of Anne R. and Amy Putnam



23-17 • Jusepe de Ribera MARTYRDOM OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW
1634. Oil on canvas, 41 $\frac{1}{4}$ " \times 44 $\frac{7}{8}$ " (1.05 \times 1.14 m). National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC. Rosenwald Collection (1950.14.744)

from Caravaggio in Italy to the Spanish masters Zurbarán and Velázquez.

During this period, the Church—aiming to draw people back to Catholicism—commissioned portrayals of heroic martyrs who had endured shocking torments as witness to their faith. Ribera's painting of the **MARTYRDOM OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW**, the apostle who was martyred by being skinned alive, captures the horror of the violence to come while emphasizing the saint's spirituality and acceptance (FIG. 23-17). The bound Bartholomew looks heavenward as his executioner tests the sharpness of the knife that he will soon use on his living victim. Ribera has learned the lessons of Caravaggio well, as he highlights the intensely realistic faces with the dramatic light of tenebrism and describes the aging wrinkled flesh in great detail. The

23-18 • Francisco de Zurbarán ST. SERAPION
1628. Oil on canvas, 47 $\frac{1}{2}$ " \times 40 $\frac{3}{4}$ " (120.7 \times 103.5 cm). Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut. Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund

compression of the figures into the foreground space heightens our sense of being witness to this scene (see FIG. 23-12).

FRANCISCO DE ZURBARÁN Francisco de Zurbarán (1598–1664) represents another martyrdom, in this case already accomplished, in his 1628 painting of **ST. SERAPION** (FIG. 23-18). Little is known of his early years before 1625, but Zurbarán came under the influence of the Caravaggesque taste prevalent in Seville, the major city in southwestern Spain, while his interest in abstract design has been traced to the heritage of Islamic art in Spain.

Zurbarán primarily worked for the monastic orders. In this painting, he portrays the martyrdom of Serapion, member of the thirteenth-century Mercedarians, a Spanish order founded to rescue the Christian prisoners of the Moors. Following the vows of his order, Serapion sacrificed himself in exchange for Christian captives. The dead man's pallor, his rough hands, and the coarse ropes contrast with the off-white of his creased Mercedarian habit, its folds carefully arranged in a pattern of highlights and varying depths of shadow. The only colors are the red and gold of the insignia. This timelessly immobile composition is like a tragic still life, a study of fabric and flesh become inanimate, silent, and at rest.



DIEGO VELÁZQUEZ Diego Rodríguez de Silva y Velázquez (1599–1660), the greatest painter to emerge from the Caravaggesque school of Seville, shared Zurbarán’s fascination with objects. He entered Seville’s painters’ guild in 1617. Like Ribera, he began his career as a tenebrist and naturalist. During his early years, he painted scenes set in taverns, markets, and kitchens, and emphasized still lifes of various foods and kitchen utensils. His early **WATER CARRIER OF SEVILLE** (FIG. 23-19) is a study of surfaces and textures of the splendid ceramic pots that characterized folk art through the centuries. Velázquez was devoted to studying and sketching from life: The man in the painting was a well-known Sevillian waterseller. Like Sánchez Cotán, Velázquez arranged the elements of his paintings with almost mathematical rigor. The objects and figures allow the artist to exhibit his virtu-

osity in rendering sculptural volumes and describing contrasting textures illuminated by dramatic natural light. Light reflects in different ways off the glazed waterpot at the left and the coarser clay jug in the foreground; it is absorbed by the rough wool and dense velvet of the costumes; it is refracted as it passes through the clear glass held by the man and the waterdrops on the jug’s surface.

In 1623, Velázquez moved to Madrid, where he became court painter to the young King Philip IV, a prestigious position that he held until his death in 1660. The opportunity to study paintings in the royal collection, as well as to travel, enabled the development of his distinctive personal style. The Flemish painter Peter Paul Rubens, during a 1628–1629 diplomatic visit to the Spanish court, convinced the king that Velázquez should visit Italy. Velázquez made two trips, the first in 1629–1631 and the second in 1649–1651. He was profoundly influenced by contemporary Italian painting, and on the first trip seems to have taken a special interest in narrative paintings with complex figure compositions.

Velázquez’s Italian studies and his growing skill in composition are apparent in both figure and landscape paintings. In **THE SURRENDER AT BREDÁ** (FIG. 23-20), painted in 1634–1635, Velázquez treats the theme of triumph and conquest in an entirely new way—far removed from traditional gloating military propaganda. Years earlier, in 1625, Ambrosio Spinola, the duke of Alba and the Spanish governor, had defeated the Dutch at Breda. As Velázquez imagined the scene of surrender, the opposing armies stand on a hilltop overlooking a vast valley where the city of Breda burns and soldiers are still deployed. The Dutch commander, Justin of Nassau, hands over the keys of Breda to the victorious Spanish commander. The entire exchange seems extraordinarily gracious, an emblem of a courtly ideal of gentlemanly conduct. The victors stand at attention, holding their densely packed lances upright in a vertical pattern—giving the painting its popular name, “The Lances”—while the defeated Dutch, a motley group, stand out of order, with pikes and banners drooping. In fact, according to reports, no keys were involved and the Dutch were more presentable in appearance than the Spaniards. Velázquez has taken liberties with historical fact to create for his Spanish patron a work of art that rendered the meaning of the surrender, rather than its actual appearance.

Velázquez displays here his compositional virtuosity and his extraordinary gifts as a visual storyteller. A strong diagonal, starting in the sword of the Dutch soldier in the lower left foreground and ending in the checked banner on the



23-19 • Diego Velázquez WATER CARRIER OF SEVILLE
c. 1619. Oil on canvas, 41½" × 31½" (105.3 × 80 cm). Victoria & Albert Museum, London.



23-20 • Diego Velázquez THE SURRENDER AT BRED (THE LANCES)
1634–1635. Oil on canvas, 10'7/8" × 12'1/2" (3.07 × 3.67 m). Museo del Prado, Madrid.

upper right, unites the composition and moves the viewer from the defeated to the victorious soldiers in the direction of the surrender itself. Portraitlike faces, meaningful gestures, and controlled color and texture convince us of the reality of the scene. Across the upper half of the huge canvas, the landscape background is startling. Velázquez painted an entirely imaginary Netherlands in greens and blues worked with flowing, liquid brushstrokes. Luminosity is achieved by laying down a thick layer of lead white and then flowing the layers of color over it. The silvery light forms a background for dramatically silhouetted figures and weapons. Velázquez revealed a breadth and intensity unsurpassed in his century, and became an inspiration to modern artists such as Manet and Picasso.

Perhaps Velázquez's most striking, certainly his most enigmatic work is the enormous multiple portrait, nearly 10½ feet tall and over 9 feet wide, known as **LAS MENINAS (THE MAIDS OF HONOR)** (FIG. 23-21), painted in 1656, near the end of his life. This painting continues to challenge viewers and stimulate debate

among art historians. Velázquez draws viewers directly into the scene. In one interpretation, the viewer stands in the very space occupied by King Philip and his queen, whose reflections can be seen in the large mirror on the back wall, perhaps a clever reference to Jan van Eyck's *Double Portrait of Giovanni Arnolfini and his Wife* (see FIG. 19-1), which was a part of the Spanish royal collection at this time. Echoing pictorially the claim made in Jan's signature, Velázquez himself is also present, brushes in hand, beside a huge canvas. The central focus, however, is neither the artist nor the royal couple but their brilliantly illuminated 5-year-old daughter, the Infanta (princess) Margarita, who is surrounded by her attendants, most of whom are identifiable portraits.

No consensus exists today on the meaning of this monumental painting. It is a royal portrait; it is also a self-portrait of Velázquez standing at his easel. But fundamentally, *Las Meninas* is a personal statement. Throughout his life, Velázquez had sought respect and acclaim for himself and for the art of painting. Here, dressed as a courtier, the Order of Santiago on his chest (added later) and the



23-21 • Diego Velázquez LAS MENINAS (THE MAIDS OF HONOR)

1656. Oil on canvas, 10'5" × 9'½" (3.18 × 2.76 m). Museo del Prado, Madrid.

The cleaning of *Las Meninas* in 1984 revealed much about Velázquez's methods. He used a minimum of underdrawing, building up his forms with layers of loosely applied paint and finishing off the surfaces with dashing highlights in white, lemon yellow, and pale orange. Rather than using light to model volumes in the time-honored manner, Velázquez tried to depict the optical properties of light reflecting from surfaces. On close inspection his forms dissolve into a maze of individual strokes of paint.



View the Closer Look for *Las Meninas* (*The Maids of Honor*) on myartslab.com

keys of the palace tucked into in his sash, Velázquez proclaims the dignity and importance of painting itself.

BARTOLOMÉ ESTEBAN MURILLO The Madrid of Velázquez was the center of Spanish art. Seville declined after an outbreak of plague in 1649, but it remained a center for trade with the Spanish colonies, where the work of Bartolomé Esteban Murillo (1617–1682) had a profound influence on art and religious iconography. Many patrons wanted images of the Virgin Mary and especially of the Immaculate Conception, the controversial idea that Mary was born free from original sin. Although the Immaculate Conception became Catholic dogma only in 1854, the con-

cept, as well as devotion to Mary, grew during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Counter-Reformation authorities had provided specific instructions for artists painting the Virgin of the Immaculate Conception: Mary was to be dressed in blue and white, her hands folded in prayer, as she is carried upward by angels, sometimes in large flocks. She may be surrounded by an unearthly light (“clothed in the sun”) and may stand on a crescent moon in reference to the woman of the Apocalypse (see FIG. 15–10). Angels often carry palms and symbols of the Virgin, such as a mirror, a fountain, roses, and lilies, and they may vanquish the serpent, Satan. The Church exported to the New World many paintings faithful to these orthodox guidelines by Murillo, Zurbarán, and others. When the indigenous population began to visualize the Christian story (see FIG. 30–46), paintings such as Murillo’s **THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION** (FIG. 23–22) provided prompts for their imaginings.

ARCHITECTURE IN SPAIN

Turning away from the severity displayed in the sixteenth-century El Escorial monastery-palace (see FIG. 22–18), seventeenth-century Spanish architects again embraced the lavish decoration that had characterized their art since the fourteenth century. Profusions of ornament swept back into fashion, first in huge *retablos* (altarpieces), then in portals (main doors often embellished with sculpture), and finally in entire buildings.

THE CATHEDRAL OF SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA In the seventeenth century, the role of St. James as patron saint of Spain was challenged by the supporters of St. Teresa of Ávila and then by supporters of St. Michael, St. Joseph, and other popular saints. It became important to the archbishop and other leaders in Santiago de Compostela, where the cathedral of St. James was located, to re-establish their primacy. They reinforced their efforts to revitalize the regular flow of pilgrims to the city, undertaken by Spaniards since the ninth century, and used architecture as part of their campaign.

Renewed interest in pilgrimages to the shrines of saints in the seventeenth century brought an influx of pilgrims, and consequently financial security, to the city and the Church. The cathedral chapter ordered an elaborate façade to be added to the twelfth-century pilgrimage church (FIG. 23–23). A



23–22 • Bartolomé Esteban Murillo THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION
c. 1660–1665. Oil on canvas, 81 $\frac{1}{8}$ " \times 56 $\frac{5}{8}$ " (2.06 \times 1.44 m). Museo del Prado, Madrid.



23-23 • WEST FAÇADE, CATHEDRAL OF ST. JAMES, SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA, SPAIN

South tower 1667–1680; north tower and central block finished mid 18th century by Fernando de Casas y Nóvoas.

south tower was built in 1667–1680 and then later copied as the north tower.

The last man to serve as architect and director of works at the cathedral, Fernando de Casas y Nóvoas (active 1711–1749), tied the disparate elements together at the west end—towers, portal, stairs—in a grand design focused on a veritable wall of glass, popularly called “The Mirror.” His design culminates in a free-standing gable soaring above the roof, visually linking the towers, and framing a statue of St. James. The extreme simplicity of the cloister walls and the archbishop’s palace at each side of the portal heightens the dazzling effect of this enormous expanse of glass windows, glittering, jewel-like, in their intricately carved granite frame.

FLANDERS AND THE NETHERLANDS

Led by the nobleman Prince William of Orange, the Netherlands’ Protestant northern provinces (present-day Holland) rebelled against Spain in 1568. The seven provinces joined together as the United Provinces in 1579 and began the long struggle for independence, achieved only in the seventeenth century. The king of Spain considered the Dutch heretical rebels, but finally the Dutch prevailed. In 1648, the United Provinces joined emissaries from Spain, the Vatican, the Holy Roman Empire, and France on equal footing in peace negotiations. The resulting Peace of Westphalia recognized the independence of the northern Netherlands.

FLANDERS

After a period of relative autonomy from 1598 to 1621 under Habsburg regents, Flanders, the southern—and predominantly Catholic—part of the Netherlands, returned to direct Spanish rule. Catholic churches were restored and important commissions focused on sacred art. As Antwerp, the capital city and major arts center of the southern Netherlands, gradually recovered from the turmoil of the religious wars, artists of great talent flourished there. Painters like Peter Paul Rubens and Anthony van Dyck established international reputations that brought them important commissions from foreign as well as local patrons.

RUBENS Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640), whose painting has become synonymous with Flemish Baroque art, was born in Germany, where his father, a Protestant, had fled from his native Antwerp to escape religious persecution. In 1587, after her husband’s death, Rubens’s mother and her children returned to Antwerp and to Catholicism. Rubens decided in his late teens to become an artist and at

age 21 was accepted into the Antwerp painters’ guild, a testament to his energy, intelligence, and skill. Shortly thereafter, in 1600, he left for Italy. In Venice, his work came to the attention of the duke of Mantua, who offered him a court post. His activities on behalf of the duke over the next eight years did much to prepare him for the rest of his long and successful career. The duke had him copy famous paintings in collections all over Italy to add to the ducal collection.

Rubens visited every major Italian city, went to Madrid as the duke’s emissary, and spent two extended periods in Rome, where he studied the great works of Roman antiquity and the Italian Renaissance. While in Italy, Rubens studied the paintings of two contemporaries, Caravaggio and Annibale Carracci. By 1607

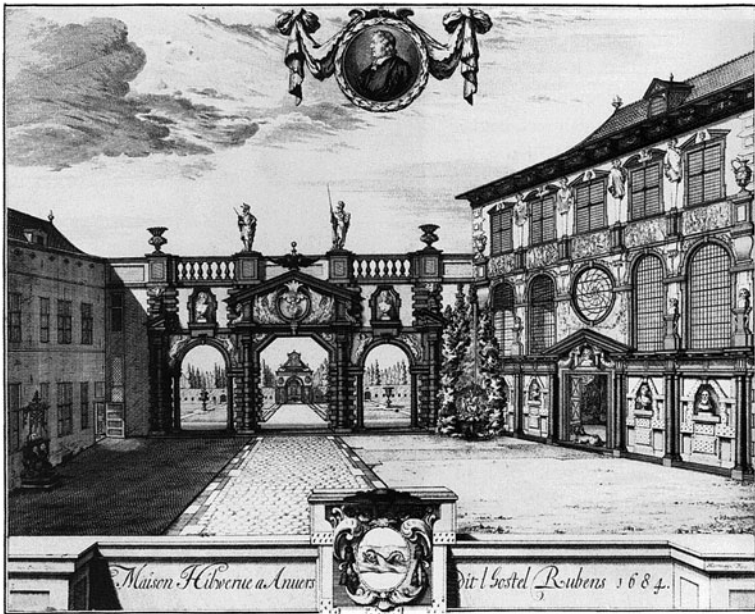
23–24 • Peter Paul Rubens
SELF-PORTRAIT WITH
ISABELLA BRANDT
1609–1610. Oil on canvas, 5'9"
× 4'5" (1.78 × 1.36 m). Alte
Pinakothek, Munich.



Rubens had persuaded the duke of Mantua to buy the former's *Death of the Virgin* (c. 1601–1602), which had been rejected by Caravaggio's patrons because of its shocking realism.

In 1608, Rubens returned to Antwerp, where in 1609 he accepted a position as court painter to the Habsburg regents of Flanders, Archduke Albert and Princess Isabella Clara Eugenia, the daughter of Philip II. Ten days after that appointment, he married the 18-year-old Isabella Brandt (1596–1626), an alliance that was financially beneficial to the artist, then almost twice the age of his bride. He commemorated the marriage with a spectacular

double portrait of himself and his bride seated together in front of a honeysuckle bower that evokes a state of marital bliss (FIG. 23–24). The self-confident couple look out to engage viewers directly, and the rich detail of their lavish costumes is described with meticulous precision, foregrounding both the artist's virtuosity and the couple's wealth and sophistication. They join right hands in a traditional gesture of marriage, and the artist slips his foot into the folds of Isabella's flowing red skirt, suggesting a more intimate connection between them. They would have three children before Isabella's untimely death in 1626.



23-25 • Peter Paul Rubens **RUBENS'S HOUSE**

Italianate addition built 1610–1615. Looking toward the garden: house at left, studio at right; house restored and opened as a museum in 1946. From an engraving of 1684. Museum Mayer van den Bergh.

In 1611, Rubens purchased a residence in Antwerp. The original house was large and typically Flemish, but Rubens added a studio in the Italian manner across a courtyard, joining the two buildings by a second-floor gallery over the entrance portal (**FIG. 23-25**). Beyond the courtyard lay the large formal garden, laid out in symmetrical beds. The living room permitted access to a gallery overlooking Rubens's huge studio, a room designed to accommodate large paintings and to house what became virtually a painting factory. The tall, arched windows provided ample light for the single, two-story room, and




23-26 • Peter Paul Rubens **THE RAISING OF THE CROSS**

Made for the Church of St. Walpurga, Antwerp, Belgium. 1610–1611. Oil on panel, center panel 15'17/8" × 11'11/2" (4.62 × 3.39 m), each wing 15'17/8" × 4'11" (4.62 × 1.52 m). Now in Cathedral of Our Lady, Antwerp.

**23–27 • Peter Paul Rubens HENRY IV
RECEIVING THE PORTRAIT OF MARIE
DE’ MEDICI**

1621–1625. Oil on canvas, 12’11 $\frac{1}{8}$ ” × 9’8 $\frac{1}{8}$ ”
(3.94 × 2.95 m). Musée du Louvre, Paris.

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a large door permitted the assistants to move finished paintings out to their designated owners. Through the gates at one side of the courtyard, one can see the architectural features of the garden.

Rubens's first major commission in Antwerp was a large canvas triptych for the main altar of the church of St. Walpurga, **THE RAISING OF THE CROSS** (FIG. 23–26), painted in 1610–1611. He extended the central action and the landscape through all three panels. At the center, Herculean figures strain to haul upright the wooden cross with Jesus already stretched upon it. At the left, the followers of Jesus join in mourning, and at the right, soldiers supervise the execution. The drama and intense emotion of Caravaggio is merged here with the virtuoso technique of Annibale Carracci, but transformed and reinterpreted according to Rubens's own unique ideal of thematic and formal unity. The heroic nude figures, dramatic lighting effects, dynamic diagonal composition, and intense emotions show his debt to Italian art, but the rich

colors and careful description of surface textures reflect his native Flemish tradition.

Rubens's expressive visual language was deemed as appropriate for representing secular rulers as it was for dramatic religious subjects. Moreover, his intelligence, courtly manners, and personal charm made him a valuable and trusted courtier to his royal patrons, who included Philip IV of Spain, Queen Marie de' Medici of France, and Charles I of England. In 1621, Marie de' Medici, who had been regent for her son Louis XIII, asked Rubens to paint the story of her life, to glorify her role in ruling France, and also to commemorate the founding of the new Bourbon royal dynasty. In 24 paintings, Rubens portrayed Marie's life and political career as one continuous triumph overseen by the ancient gods of Greece and Rome.

In the painting depicting the royal engagement (FIG. 23–27), Henry IV immediately falls in love with Marie as he gazes at her

A CLOSER LOOK | *Prometheus Bound*

by Peter Paul Rubens and Frans Snyders.

c. 1611–1618. Oil on canvas, 95½" × 82½" (2.43 × 2.1 m). Philadelphia Museum of Art.

The struggle between Prometheus and the eagle was interpreted allegorically during the seventeenth century, sometimes as the struggle involved in artistic creativity, or as the heroism involved in enduring suffering of body or soul. Some saw in Prometheus a prototype of the Christ of the Crucifixion, an association furthered here by the placement of the gash on Prometheus' side.

The eagle in this picture was painted by Frans Snyders, a specialist in painting animals and flowers whom Rubens brought in to render the detailed feathers and powerful posture of this bird of prey.



After the main composition was complete, Rubens added this 17½ inch strip of canvas to the left side of the painting to provide a more expansive space for the dramatic action, allow the inclusion at lower left of the fire that got Prometheus into trouble, and provide the bright light on the horizon that some have interpreted as a touch of optimism to counteract the enduring punishment enacted in the foreground.

The eagle has pierced Prometheus' side to devour his liver, an action that identifies the subject here. This hero of Greek myth was chained to Mount Caucasus and sentenced to this sensational punishment because, in direct defiance of Zeus' command, he stole fire from Mount Olympus and sneaked it to earth so humankind would no longer be confined to cold and darkness. And since Prometheus' liver regenerated over each night, his fate was to have it plucked out again and again, day after day.

The talons of the eagle are poised to dig into the sensitive areas of the groin and face of the struggling hero to underline for viewers the excruciating nature of his pain.

These small chains that confine Prometheus to the rock seem hardly adequate to confine the powerfully muscular hero, as Rubens conceives him, leading some to speculate that the artist wanted his incarceration to seem more psychological than physical.

 [View](#) the Closer Look for *Prometheus Bound* on myartslab.com

portrait, shown to him—at the exact center of the composition—by Cupid and Hymen, the god of marriage. The supreme Roman god Jupiter and his wife Juno look down approvingly from the clouds. A personification of France encourages Henry, outfitted with steel breastplate and silhouetted against a landscape in which the smoke of a battle lingers in the distance, to abandon war for love, as *putti* play below with the rest of his armor. The ripe colors, lavish textures, and dramatic diagonals give sustained visual excitement to these enormous canvases, making them not only important works of art but also political propaganda of the highest order.

To satisfy his clients all over Europe, Rubens employed dozens of assistants, many of whom were, or became, important

painters in their own right. Using workshop assistants was standard practice for a major artist, but Rubens was particularly methodical, training or hiring specialists in costumes, still lifes, landscapes, portraiture, and animal painting who together could complete works from his detailed sketches. Some of his most spectacular paintings were collaborations. Frans Snyders (1579–1657), a specialist in painting animals and flowers, was brought in by Rubens to paint the enormous eagle who devours the liver of the mythical hero in **PROMETHEUS BOUND** (see “A Closer Look,” above), begun in 1611–12 and perhaps worked on as late as 1618. The dramatic lighting, dynamic composition, and loose, energetic brushwork of this painting—which the artist kept for a while in his own personal

collection—was clearly Rubens’s own, while the tight and detailed technique of Snyders sets up within the painting a telling representational contrast between the massive predator and its writhing, muscular victim. Among Rubens’s other collaborators were his friend and neighbor Jan Brueghel the Elder (1568–1625, son of Pieter Bruegel the Elder, see “Bruegel’s Cycle of the Months,” page 704) and Anthony van Dyck.

PORTRAITS AND STILL LIVES In addition to collaborating with Rubens, Anthony van Dyck (1599–1641), had an illustrious independent career as a portraitist. Son of an Antwerp silk merchant, he was listed as a pupil of the dean of Antwerp’s Guild of St. Luke at age 10. He had his own studio and roster of pupils at age 16 but was not made a member of the guild until 1618, the year after he began his association with Rubens as a specialist in painting heads. The need to blend his work seamlessly with that of Rubens enhanced Van Dyck’s technical skill. After a trip to the English court of James I (r. 1603–1625) in 1620, Van Dyck traveled to Italy and worked as a portrait painter for seven years before returning to Antwerp. In 1632, he returned

to England as the court painter to Charles I (r. 1625–1649), by whom he was knighted and given a studio, a summer home, and a large salary.

Van Dyck’s many portraits of the royal family provide a sympathetic record of their features and demeanor. In **CHARLES I AT THE HUNT (FIG. 23-28)**, of 1635, Van Dyck was able, by clever manipulation of the setting, to portray the king truthfully and still present him as an imposing figure. Dressed casually for the hunt and standing on a bluff overlooking a distant view (a device used by Rubens to enhance the stature of Henry IV; see FIG. 23-27), Charles, who was in fact very short, appears here taller than his pages and even than his horse, since its head is down and its heavy body is partly off the canvas. The viewer’s gaze is diverted from the king’s delicate and rather short frame to his pleasant features, framed by his jauntily cocked cavalier’s hat and the graceful cascade of his hair. As if in decorous homage, the tree branches bow gracefully toward him, echoing the curving lines of the hat.

Our term, “still life,” for paintings of artfully arranged objects on a table, comes from the Dutch *stilleven*, a word coined about 1650. The Antwerp artist Clara Peeters (1594–c. 1657) specialized



23-28 • Anthony van Dyck
CHARLES I AT THE HUNT
 1635. Oil on canvas, 8'11" × 6'11" (2.75 × 2.14 m). Musée du Louvre, Paris.



23-29 • Clara Peeters STILL LIFE WITH FLOWERS, GOBLET, DRIED FRUIT, AND PRETZELS
1611. Oil on panel, 20½" × 28¾" (52 × 73 cm). Museo del Prado, Madrid.

Like many "breakfast pieces," this painting features a pile of pretzels among the elegant tableware. The salty, twisted bread was called *pretzel* (from the Latin *pretiola*, meaning "small reward") because it was invented by German monks to reward children who had learned their prayers. The twisted shapes represented the crossed arms of a child praying.

in still-life tabletop arrangements (see Introduction, "A Closer Look," page xxxiv, FIG. A). She was a precocious young woman whose career seems to have begun before she was 14. Of some 50 paintings now attributed to her (of which more than 30 are signed), many are of the type called "breakfast pieces," showing a table set for a meal of bread and fruit. Peeters was one of the first artists to combine flowers and food in a single painting, as in her **STILL LIFE WITH FLOWERS, GOBLET, DRIED FRUIT, AND PRETZELS** (FIG. 23-29), of 1611. Peeters arranged rich tableware and food against neutral, almost black backgrounds, the better to emphasize the fall of light over the contrasting surface textures. In a display of precious objects that must have appealed to her clients, the luxurious goblet and bowl contrast with simple stoneware and pewter, as do the delicate flowers with the homey pretzels. The pretzels, piled on the pewter tray, are a particularly interesting Baroque element, with their complex multiple curves.

THE DUTCH REPUBLIC

The House of Orange was not notable for its patronage of the arts, but patronage improved significantly under Prince Frederick Henry (r. 1625–1647), and Dutch artists found many other eager patrons among the prosperous middle class in Amsterdam, Leiden, Haarlem, Delft, and Utrecht. The Hague was the capital city and the preferred residence of the House of Orange, but Amsterdam was the true center of power, because of its sea trade and the enterprise of its merchants, who made the city an international commercial center. The Dutch delighted in depictions of themselves and their country—the landscape, cities, and domestic life—not to mention beautiful and interesting objects to be seen in still-life paintings and interior scenes. A well-educated people, the Dutch were also fascinated by history, mythology, the Bible, new scientific discoveries, commercial expansion abroad, and colonial exploration.



23-30 • Hendrick ter Brugghen
ST. SEBASTIAN TENDED BY
ST. IRENE

1625. Oil on canvas, 58¹⁵/₁₆" × 47¹/₂"
 (149.6 × 120 cm). Allen Memorial
 Art Museum, Oberlin College, Ohio.
 R.T. Miller Jr. Fund (1953.256)

Visitors to the Netherlands in the seventeenth century noted the popularity of art among merchants and working people. This taste for art stimulated a free market for paintings that functioned like other commodity markets. Artists had to compete to capture the interest of the public by painting on speculation. Specialists in particularly popular types of images were most likely to be financially successful, and what most Dutch patrons wanted were paintings of themselves, their country, their homes, their possessions, and the life around them—characterized by active trade, bustling mercantilism, Protestant religiosity, and jarring class distinctions. The demand for art also gave rise to an active market for the graphic arts, both for original compositions and for copies of paintings, since one copperplate could produce hundreds of impressions, and worn-out plates could be reworked and used again.

THE INFLUENCE OF ITALY Hendrick ter Brugghen (1588–1629) had spent time in Rome, perhaps between 1608 and 1614, where he must have seen Caravaggio's works and became an enthusiastic follower. On his return home, in 1616, Ter Brugghen entered the Utrecht painters' guild, introducing Caravaggio's style into the Netherlands in paintings such as **ST. SEBASTIAN TENDED BY ST. IRENE** (FIG. 23-30), and becoming the best known of the Utrecht "Caravaggisti." The sickly gray-green flesh of the nearly dead St. Sebastian, painted in an almost monochromatic palette, contrasts with the brilliant red and gold brocade of what seems to be his crumpled garment. Actually this is the cope of the bishop of Utrecht, which had survived destruction by Protestants and become a symbol of Catholicism in Utrecht. The saint is cast as a heroic figure, his strong, youthful body still bound

to the tree. But St. Irene (the patron saint of nurses) delicately removes one of the arrows that pierce him, and her maid reaches to untie his wrists. In a typically Baroque manner, the powerful diagonal created by St. Sebastian's left arm dislodges him from the triangular stability of the group. The immediacy and emotional engagement of the work are enhanced by crowding all the figures into the foreground plane, an effect strengthened by the low horizon line, another aspect of this painting that recalls the work of Caravaggio. The tenebrism and dramatic lighting effects are likewise Caravaggesque, as is the frank realism of the women's faces, with reddened noses and rosy cheeks. Rembrandt, Vermeer, and Rubens all admired Ter Brugghen's painting.

FRANS HALS Frans Hals (c. 1581/1585–1666), the leading painter of Haarlem, developed a style grounded in the Netherlandish love of description and inspired by the Caravaggesque style introduced by artists such as Ter Brugghen. Like Velázquez, he tried to recreate the optical effects of light on the shapes and textures of objects. He painted boldly, with slashing strokes and angular patches of paint. Only when seen at a distance do the colors merge into solid forms over which a flickering light seems to move. In Hals's hands, this seemingly effortless, loose technique suggests the spontaneity of an infectious joy in life. He was known primarily as a portraitist.

Seventeenth-century Dutch portraiture took many forms, ranging from single figures in sparsely furnished settings to allegorical depictions of groups in elaborate costumes surrounded by symbols and attributes. Although the faithful description of facial features and costumes was the most important gauge of a portrait's

success, some painters, like Hals, went beyond likeness to convey a sense of mood or emotion in the sitter. Fundamentally, portraits functioned as social statements of the sitters' status coupled with a clear sense of identity rooted in recognizable faces.

Group portraiture documenting the membership of corporate organizations was a Dutch specialty, and Hals painted some of the greatest examples. These large canvases, filled with many individuals who shared the cost of the commission, challenged painters to present a coherent, interesting composition that nevertheless gave equal attention to each individual portrait. Most artists arranged their sitters in neat rows to depict every face clearly, but in **OFFICERS OF THE HAARLEM MILITIA COMPANY OF ST. ADRIAN** (FIG. 23-31) of about 1627, Hals transforms the group portrait into a lively social event. The company, made up of several guard units, was charged with the military protection of Haarlem. Officers came from the upper middle class and held their commissions for three years, whereas the ordinary guards were tradespeople and craftsmakers. Each company was organized like a guild, traditionally under the patronage of a saint, and functioned mainly as a fraternal order, holding archery competitions and taking part in city processions. Hals's composition is based on a strong underlying geometry of diagonal lines—gestures, banners, and sashes—balanced by the stabilizing perpendiculars of table, window, and tall glass. The black suits and hats make the white ruffs and sashes of rose, white, and baby blue even more brilliant.

Although Hals focused his career on portraits of wealthy members of Haarlem's merchant class, he also painted images of eccentric local figures that, although they follow the format of portraiture, functioned as genre paintings by commenting on the



23-31 • Frans Hals
OFFICERS OF THE
HAARLEM MILITIA
COMPANY OF
ST. ADRIAN
 c. 1627. Oil on canvas,
 6' × 8'8" (1.83 × 2.67 m).
 Frans Halsmuseum, Haarlem.



23-32 • Frans Hals MALLE BABBE
c. 1630–1633. Oil on canvas, 30⁷/₈" × 26" (78.5 × 66.2 cm).
Staatliche Museen, Berlin.

nature of modern life. Among the most striking of these is a painting of the 1630s, portraying a laughing—presumably inebriated—older woman with a large beer tankard in her right hand and a shadowy owl perched on her shoulder, known as **MALLE BABBE** (FIG. 23-32). The figure is based on a real individual, a well-known Haarlem barmaid who was eventually confined to a charitable mental institution; the word “Malle” means loony or mad, and the owl was a popular symbol of folly. Hals’s painting technique in this character study is looser and more energetic than in most of his formal portraits, where he often restrained his stylistic exuberance to conform to the expectations of his wealthy sitters. Here he felt freer in a painting that may have had personal significance. The historical Malle Babbe was confined

to the same workhouse for the mentally impaired as Hals’s own son Pieter, raising the question of whether this lively vignette of pub life was meant as a celebration of local color or as a bracing social commentary.

JUDITH LEYSTER A painting that had long been praised as one of Hals’s finest works is actually by Judith Leyster (c. 1609–1660), Hals’s contemporary. A cleaning uncovered her distinctive signature, the monogram “JL” with a star, which refers to her surname, meaning “pole star.” Leyster’s work shows clear echoes of her exposure to the Utrecht painters who had enthusiastically adopted the principal features of Caravaggio’s style. Since Leyster signed in 1631 as a witness at the baptism in Haarlem of one of Hals’s children, it is assumed they were close; she may also have worked in his shop. She entered Haarlem’s Guild of St. Luke in 1633, which allowed her to take pupils into her studio, and her competitive relationship with Frans Hals around that time is made clear by the complaint she lodged against him in 1635 for luring away one of her apprentices.

Leyster is known primarily for informal scenes of daily life, which often carry an underlying moralistic theme. In her lively **SELF-PORTRAIT** of 1635 (FIG. 23-33), the artist has interrupted her work to lean back and look at viewers, as if they had just entered the room. Her elegant dress and the fine chair in which



23-33 • Judith Leyster SELF-PORTRAIT
1635. Oil on canvas, 29³/₈" × 25⁵/₈" (74.6 × 65.1 cm).
National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC.
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Woods Bliss (1949.6.4)

she sits are symbols of her success as an artist whose popularity was based on the very type of painting in progress on her easel. One critic has suggested that her subject—a man playing a violin—may be a visual pun on the painter with palette and brush. Leyster's understanding of light and texture is truly remarkable. The brushwork she used to depict her own flesh and delicate ruff is more controlled than Hals's loose technique, and forms an interesting contrast to the broad strokes of thick paint she used to create her full, stiff skirt. She further emphasized the difference between her portrait and her painting by executing the image on her easel in lighter tones and softer, looser brushwork. The narrow range of colors sensitively dispersed in the composition and the warm spotlighting are typical of Leyster's mature style.

REMBRANDT VAN RIJN The most important painter working in Amsterdam in the seventeenth century was Rembrandt van Rijn (1606–1669). One of nine children born in Leiden to

a miller and his wife, Rembrandt studied under Pieter Lastman (1583–1633), the principal painter in Amsterdam at the time. From Lastman, a history painter who had worked in Rome, Rembrandt absorbed an interest in the naturalism, drama, and tenebrism championed by Caravaggio. By the 1630s, Rembrandt was established in Amsterdam primarily as a portrait painter, although he also painted a wide range of narrative themes and landscapes.

In his first group portrait, **THE ANATOMY LESSON OF DR. NICOLAES TULP** (FIG. 23-34) of 1632, Rembrandt combined his scientific and humanistic interests. Frans Hals had activated the group portrait rather than conceiving it as a simple reproduction of posed figures and faces; Rembrandt transformed it into a charged moment from a life story. Dr. Tulp, head of the surgeons' guild from 1628 to 1653, sits right of center, while a group of fellow physicians gathers around to observe the cadaver and learn from the famed anatomist. Rembrandt built his composition on a sharp diagonal that pierces space from right to left, uniting



23-34 • Rembrandt van Rijn THE ANATOMY LESSON OF DR. NICOLAES TULP
1632. Oil on canvas, 5'3¾" × 7'1¼" (1.6 × 2.1 m). Mauritshuis, The Hague.

 [View](#) the Closer Look for *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp* on [myartslab.com](#)



23-35 • Rembrandt van Rijn THE COMPANY OF CAPTAIN FRANS BANNING COCQ (THE NIGHT WATCH)
1642. Oil on canvas, 11'11" × 14'4" (3.63 × 4.37 m) (cut down from the original size). Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

the cadaver on the table, the calculated arrangement of speaker and listeners, and the open book into a dramatic narrative event. Rembrandt makes effective use of Caravaggio's tenebrist technique, as the figures emerge from a dark and undefined ambience, their attentive faces framed by brilliant white ruffs. Radiant light streams down to spotlight the ghostly flesh of the cadaver, drawing our attention to the extended arms of Dr. Tulp, who flexes his own left hand to demonstrate the action of the cadaver's arm muscles that he lifts up with silver forceps. Unseen by the viewers are the illustrations of the huge book, presumably an edition of Andreas Vesalius's study of human anatomy, published in Basel in 1543, which was the first attempt at accurate anatomical illustrations in print. Rembrandt's painting has been seen as an homage to Vesalius and to science, as well as a portrait of the members of the Amsterdam surgeons' guild.

Prolific and popular with his Amsterdam clientele, Rembrandt ran a busy studio, producing works that sold for high prices. The prodigious output of his large workshop and of the many followers who imitated his manner has made it difficult for scholars to define his body of work, and many paintings formerly attributed to Rembrandt have recently been assigned to other artists. Rembrandt's mature work reflected his cosmopolitan city environment, his study of science and nature, and the broadening of his artistic vocabulary by the study of Italian Renaissance art, chiefly from engravings and paintings imported by the busy Amsterdam art market.


In 1642, Rembrandt was one of several artists commissioned by a wealthy civic-guard company to create large group portraits of its members for its new meeting hall. The result, **THE COMPANY OF CAPTAIN FRANS BANNING COCQ (FIG. 23-35)**, carries the idea of a group portrait as a dramatic event even farther. Because

TECHNIQUE | Etching and Drypoint

Rembrandt was the first artist to popularize **etching** as a major form of artistic expression. Etching is an intaglio technique, meaning that the design is carved out of the surface of the printing plate. First the metal plate is coated on both sides with an acid-resistant resin that dries hard without being brittle. Then, instead of laboriously cutting the lines of the desired image directly into the plate as in an engraving (see “Woodcuts and Engravings on Metal,” page 592) the artist scratches delicately through the resin with a sharp needle to expose the metal. The plate is then immersed in acid, which eats into the metal exposed by the drawn lines. By controlling the time the acid stays on different parts of the plate, the artist can make shallow, fine lines or deep, heavy ones. After the resin coating is removed from the surface of the plate, an impression is taken. If changes need to be made, lines can be “erased” with a sharp

metal scraper. Not surprisingly, a complex image with a wide range of tones requires many steps.

Another intaglio technique for registering images with incised lines on a metal plate is called **drypoint**, in which a sharp needle is used to scratch lines directly into the metal. In drypoint, however, the burr (metal pushed up by the drypoint needle) is left in place. Unlike engraving, in which the burr is scraped off, here both the burr and the groove hold the ink. This creates a printed line with a rich black appearance that is impossible to achieve with engraving or etching alone. Unfortunately, drypoint burr is fragile, and no more than a dozen prints can be made before it flattens and loses its character. Rembrandt’s earliest prints were entirely etched, but later he added drypoint to develop tonal richness.

 **Watch** a video about the process of intaglio on myartslab.com

a dense layer of grime had darkened and obscured its colors, this painting was once thought to be a nocturnal scene and was therefore called *The Night Watch*. After cleaning and restoration in 1975–1976, it now exhibits a natural golden light that sets afire the palette of rich colors—browns, blues, olive-green, orange, and red—around a central core of lemon yellow in the costume of a lieutenant. To the dramatic group composition, showing a company forming for a parade in an Amsterdam street, Rembrandt added several colorful but seemingly unnecessary figures. While the officers stride purposefully forward, the rest of the men and several mischievous children mill about. The radiant young girl

in the left middle ground, carrying a chicken with prominent claws (*klaauw* in Dutch), may be a pun on the kind of guns (*klower*) that gave the name (the *Kloveniers*) to the company. Chicken legs with claws also are part of its coat of arms. The complex interactions of the figures and the vivid, individualized likenesses of the militiamen make this one of the greatest group portraits in the Dutch tradition.

In his enthusiasm for printmaking as an important art form with its own aesthetic qualities, Rembrandt was remarkably like Albrecht Dürer (see FIGS. 22-7, 22-8). Beginning in 1627, he focused on etching, which uses acid to inscribe a design on metal



23-36 • Rembrandt van Rijn THREE CROSSES (FIRST STATE)

1653. Drypoint, 15 $\frac{1}{8}$ " \times 17 $\frac{3}{4}$ " (38.5 \times 45 cm).
Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.



23-37 • Rembrandt van Rijn THREE CROSSES (FOURTH STATE)

1653. Drypoint, 15 $\frac{1}{8}$ " \times 17 $\frac{3}{4}$ " (38.5 \times 45 cm).
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

plates. About a decade later, he began to experiment with making additions to his compositions in the drypoint technique, in which the artist uses a sharp needle to scratch shallow lines in a plate. Because etching and drypoint allow the artist to work directly on the plate, the style of the finished print can have the relatively free and spontaneous character of a drawing (see “Etching and Drypoint,” opposite). In these works Rembrandt alone took charge of the creative process, from the preparation of the plate to its inking and printing, and he constantly experimented with the technique, with methods of inking, and with papers for printing. Rembrandt’s prints were sought after, widely collected, and attracted high prices, even in his lifetime.

Rembrandt’s deep speculations on the meaning of the life of Christ evolve in a series of prints of the **THREE CROSSES**, that comes down to us in five states, or stages, of the creative and printing process, in this case created exclusively using the drypoint technique. (Only the first and fourth states are reproduced here.) Rembrandt sought to capture the moment described in the Gospels when, during the Crucifixion, darkness covered the Earth and Jesus cried out, “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.” In the first state (**FIG. 23-36**), the centurion kneels in front of the cross while other terrified people run from the scene. The Virgin Mary and St. John share the light flooding down from heaven. By the fourth state (**FIG. 23-37**), Rembrandt has completely reworked and reinterpreted the theme. As in the first state, the shattered hill of Golgotha dominates the foreground, but now the scene is considerably darker, and some of the people in the first state, including even Mary and Jesus’ friends, have almost disappeared. The horseman holding the lance now faces Jesus. The composition has become more compact, the individual elements are simplified, and the emotions are intensified. An oval of light below the base of the cross draws viewers’ attention to the figure of Jesus, and the people around him are trapped in mute confrontation. The first state is a detailed rendering of a narrative moment, bustling with detail; the fourth state reduces the event to its mysterious essence. The eternal battles of dark and light, doom and salvation, evil and good—all seem to be waged anew.

As he aged, Rembrandt painted ever more brilliantly, varying textures and paint from the thinnest glazes to thick **impasto** (heavily applied pigments), creating a rich, luminous *chiaroscuro*, ranging from deepest shadow to brilliant highlights in a dazzling display of gold, red, and chestnut-brown. His sensitivity to the human

condition is perhaps nowhere more powerfully expressed than in his late self-portraits, which became more searching as he aged. Distilling a lifetime of study and contemplation, he expressed an internalized spirituality new in the history of art. In his **SELF-PORTRAIT** of 1658 (**FIG. 23-38**), the artist assumes a regal pose, at ease, with arms and legs spread, holding a staff as if it were a baton of command. Yet we know that fortune no longer smiled on him; he had declared bankruptcy in 1656, and over the two-year period between that moment and this self-portrait he had sold his private art collection and even his house to cover his debts. It is possible to relate the stress of this situation to the way he represents himself here. A few well-placed brushstrokes suggest the physical tension in the fingers and the weariness of the deep-set eyes. Mercilessly analytical, the portrait depicts the furrowed brow, sagging flesh, and aging face of one who has suffered pitfalls but managed to survive, retaining his dignity.



23-38 • Rembrandt van Rijn SELF-PORTRAIT

1658. Oil on canvas, 52 $\frac{5}{8}$ " \times 40 $\frac{7}{8}$ " (133.6 \times 103.8 cm). The Frick Collection, New York.



23-39 • Johannes Vermeer VIEW OF DELFT
c. 1662. Oil on canvas, 38½" × 46¼" (97.8 × 117.5 cm).
Royal Picture Gallery, Mauritshuis, The Hague.

JOHANNES VERMEER One of the most intriguing Dutch artists of this period is Johannes Vermeer (1632–1675), who was also an innkeeper and art dealer. He entered the Delft artists' guild in 1653 and painted only for local patrons. Meticulous in his technique, with a unique and highly structured compositional approach and soft, liquid painting style, Vermeer produced fewer than 40 canvases that can be securely attributed to him. The more these paintings are studied, the more questions arise about the artist's life and his methods. Vermeer's **VIEW OF DELFT** (Fig. 23-39), for example, is no simple cityscape. Although the artist convinces the viewer of its authenticity, he does not paint a photographic reproduction of the scene; Vermeer moves buildings around to create an ideal composition. He endows the city with a timeless stability by a stress on horizontal lines, the careful placement of buildings, the quiet atmosphere, and the clear, even light that seems to emerge from beneath low-lying clouds. Vermeer may have experimented with the mechanical device known as the **camera obscura** (see Chapter 31, page 968), not as a method of reproducing the image but as another tool in the visual analysis of the composition. The camera obscura would have enhanced optical distortions that led to the "beading" of highlights (seen here on the harbored ships and dark gray architecture), which creates the illusion of brilliant light but does not dissolve the underlying form.

Most of Vermeer's paintings portray enigmatic scenes of women in their homes, alone or with a servant, occupied with some refined activity, such as writing, reading letters, or playing a musical instrument. These are quiet and still interior scenes, gentle in color, asymmetrical but strongly geometric in organization. By creating a contained and consistent architectonic world in which each object adds to the clarity and balance of the composition, Vermeer transports everyday scenes to a level of unearthly perfection. An even, pearly light from a window often gives solidity to the figures and objects in a room. All emotion is subdued, evoking a mood of quiet meditation. Vermeer's brushwork is so controlled that it becomes invisible, except when he paints his characteristic pools of reflected light as tiny, pearl-like droplets of color.

In **WOMAN HOLDING A BALANCE** (Fig. 23-40), studied equilibrium creates a monumental composition and a moment of supreme stillness. The woman contemplates the balance in her right hand, drawing our attention to the act of weighing and judging. Her hand and the scale are central, but directly behind her head, on the wall of the room, is a painting of the Last Judgment, highlighting the figure of Christ the Judge in a gold aureole above her head. The juxtaposition seems to turn Vermeer's genre scene into a metaphor for eternal judgment, a sobering religious reference that may reflect the artist's own position as a Catholic living in a Protestant country. The woman's moment of quiet introspection

in front of the gold and pearls displayed on the table before her, shimmering with reflected light from the window, also evokes the *vanitas* theme of the transience of earthly life, allowing the painter to comment on the ephemeral quality of material things.

GENRE SCENES Continuing a long Netherlandish tradition, seventeenth-century genre paintings—generally made for private patrons and depicting scenes of contemporary daily life—were often laden with symbolic references, although their meaning is not always clear to us now. A clean house might indicate a virtuous housewife and mother, while a messy household suggested

laziness and the sin of sloth. Ladies dressing in front of mirrors certainly could be succumbing to vanity, and drinking parties led to overindulgence and lust.

Gerard ter Borch (1617–1681) was one of the most refined of the genre painters. In his painting traditionally known as **THE SUITOR'S VISIT** (FIG. 23-41), from about 1658, a well-dressed man bows gracefully to an elegant woman arrayed in white satin, who stands in a sumptuously furnished room in which another woman plays a lute. Another man, in front of a fireplace, turns to observe the newcomer. The painting appears to represent a prosperous gentleman paying a call on a lady of equal social status,



23-40 • Johannes Vermeer WOMAN HOLDING A BALANCE

c. 1664. Oil on canvas, 15 $\frac{5}{8}$ " \times 14" (39.7 \times 35.5 cm). National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC. Widener Collection (1942.9.97)

 **Watch** a video about Vermeer's *Woman Holding a Balance* on myartslab.com



23-41 • Gerard ter Borch THE SUITOR'S VISIT
c. 1658. Oil on canvas, 32½" × 29⅝"
(82.6 × 75.3 cm). National Gallery
of Art, Washington, DC. Andrew W.
Mellon Collection

possibly a courtship scene. The spaniel and the musician seem to be simply part of the scene, but we are already familiar with the dog as a symbol of fidelity, and stringed instruments were said to symbolize, through their tuning, the harmony of souls and thus, possibly, a loving relationship. On the other hand, music making was also associated with sensory pleasure evoked by touch. Ter Borch's exquisite rendering highlights the lace, velvet, and especially the satin of these opulent outfits, potentially symbols of personal excess. If there is a moral lesson, it is presented discreetly and ambiguously.

Another important genre painter is Jan Steen (1626–1679), whose larger brushstrokes contrast with the meticulous treatment of Ter Borch and reveal an artistic affinity with Frans Hals. Steen painted over 800 works but never achieved financial success. Most of his scenes used everyday life to portray moral tales, illustrate proverbs and folk sayings, or make puns to amuse the spectator. Since Steen traveled throughout the Netherlands all his life, and since during the 1670s he was a tavern owner in Leiden, he had many sources of inspiration for the lively human dramas highlighted in his paintings.

Jan Steen's paintings of children are especially remarkable, for he captured not only their childish physiques but also their fleeting

moods and expressions with rapid and fluid brushstrokes. A characteristic example is his painting **THE FEAST OF ST. NICHOLAS (FIG. 23-42)**, from the 1660s. Steen's household setting holds none of the intimate order and quiet stillness favored by Vermeer, nor the elegant decorum and guarded interaction portrayed by Ter Borch. This is a scene of noisy commotion within a joyous family get-together, where children react in various ways—disappointment, delight, possessiveness—to the pre-Christmas gifts St. Nicholas has left for them in their shoes. Steen renders the objects scattered in the disordered foreground with meticulous attention to the details of surface texture, but the focus here is the festive atmosphere of a boisterous holiday morning and the folksy figures who delight in the celebration.

Emanuel de Witte (1617–1692) of Rotterdam specialized in architectural interiors, first in Delft in 1640 and then in Amsterdam after settling there permanently in 1652. Although many of his interiors were composites of features from several locations combined in one idealized architectural view, De Witte also painted faithful "portraits" of actual buildings. One of these is his **POR-TUGUESE SYNAGOGUE, AMSTERDAM (FIG. 23-43)** of 1680. The synagogue shown here, which still stands in Amsterdam, is a rectangular hall divided into one wide central aisle with narrow



23-42 • Jan Steen THE FEAST OF ST. NICHOLAS
c. 1660–1665. Oil on canvas, 32¼" × 27¾" (82 × 70.5 cm).
Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

were well-to-do merchants. Fund-raising for a new synagogue began in 1670, and in 1671 Elias Bouman and Daniel Stalpaert began work on the building. With its classical architecture, Brazilian jacaranda-wood furniture, and 26 brass chandeliers, this synagogue was considered one of the most impressive buildings in Amsterdam.

LANDSCAPE The Dutch loved the landscapes and vast skies of their own country, but landscape painters worked in their studios rather than in nature, and they were never afraid to rearrange, add to, or subtract from a scene in order to give their compositions formal organization or a desired mood. Starting in the 1620s, landscape painters generally adhered to a convention in which little color was used beyond browns, grays, and beiges. After 1650, they tended toward more individualistic styles, but nearly all brought a broader range of colors into play. One continuing motif was the emphasis on

side aisles, each covered with a wooden barrel vault resting on lintels supported by columns. De Witte's shift of the viewpoint slightly to one side has created an intriguing spatial composition, and strong contrasts of light and shade add dramatic movement to the simple interior. The elegant couple and the dogs in the foreground provide both a sense of scale for the architecture and some human interest for viewers.

Today, this painting is interesting not only as a work of art, but also as a record of seventeenth-century synagogue architecture, documenting Dutch religious tolerance in an age when European Jews were often persecuted. Expelled from Spain and Portugal from the late fifteenth century on, many Jews had settled in Amsterdam, and their community numbered about 2,300 people, most of whom

23-43 • Emanuel de Witte PORTUGUESE SYNAGOGUE, AMSTERDAM

1680. Oil on canvas, 43½" × 39" (110.5 × 99.1 cm).
Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

Architects Daniel Stalpaert and Elias Bouman built the synagogue in 1671–1675.





23-44 • Jacob van Ruisdael VIEW OF HAARLEM FROM THE DUNES AT OVERVEEN
c. 1670. Oil on canvas, 22" × 24¼" (55.8 × 62.8 cm). Royal Picture Gallery, Mauritshuis, The Hague.

cloud-filled expanses of sky dominating a relatively narrow horizontal band of earth below.

The Haarlem landscape specialist Jacob van Ruisdael (1628/29–1682), whose popularity drew many pupils to his workshop, was especially adept at both the invention of dramatic compositions and the projection of moods. His **VIEW OF HAARLEM FROM THE DUNES AT OVERVEEN** (FIG. 23-44), painted about 1670, celebrates the flatlands outside Haarlem that had been reclaimed from the sea as part of a massive landfill project that the Dutch compared with God's restoration of the Earth after Noah's Flood. Such a religious interpretation may be referenced here in the prominent Gothic church of St. Bavo, looming on the horizon.

There may be other messages as well. While almost three-quarters of this painting is devoted to a rendering of the powerfully cloudy sky, tiny humans can be seen laboring below, caught in the process of spreading white linen across the broad fields to bleach in the sun. This glorification of the industriousness of citizens engaged in one of Haarlem's principal industries must have made the painting particularly appealing to the patriotic local market.

STILL LIVES AND FLOWER PIECES The Dutch were so proud of their still-life painting tradition that they presented a flower painting by Rachel Ruysch to the French queen Marie de' Medici during her state visit to Amsterdam. Like genre paintings,



23-45 • Pieter Claesz STILL LIFE WITH TAZZA

1636. Oil on panel, 17³/₈" × 24" (44 × 61 cm). Royal Cabinet of Paintings Mauritshuis, The Hague.

The heavy round glass is a Roemer, a relatively inexpensive, everyday item, as are the pewter plates. The silver cup (*tazza*) was a typical ornamental piece. Painters owned and shared such valuable props, and this and other showpieces appear in many paintings.

a still-life painting might carry moralizing connotations and commonly had a *vanitas* theme, reminding viewers of the transience of life and material possessions, even art. Yet it can also document and showcase the wealth of its owner.

One of the first Dutch still-life painters was Pieter Claesz (1596/97–1660) of Haarlem, who, like Antwerp artist Clara Peeters (see FIG. 23-29), painted “breakfast pieces,” that is, meals of bread, fruits, and nuts. In subtle, nearly monochromatic paintings, such as **STILL LIFE WITH TAZZA** (FIG. 23-45), Claesz seems to give life to inanimate objects. He organizes dishes in diagonal positions to give a strong sense of space—here reinforced by the spiraling strip of lemon peel, foreshortened with the plate into the foreground and reaching toward the viewer’s own space—and he renders the maximum contrast of textures within a subtle palette of yellows, browns, greens, and silvery whites. The tilted silver *tazza* contrasts with the half-filled glass, which becomes a towering monumental presence and permits Claesz to display his skill at transparencies

and reflections. Such paintings suggest the prosperity of Claesz’s patrons. The food might be simple, but the silver ornamental cup graced the tables of only the wealthy. The meticulously painted timepiece could suggest deeper meanings—it alludes to human technological achievement, but also to the inexorable passage of time and the fleeting nature of human life, thoughts also prompted by the interrupted breakfast, casually placed knife, and toppled tableware.

Still-life paintings in which cut-flower arrangements predominate were referred to simply as “flower pieces.” Significant advances were made in botany during the seventeenth century through the application of orderly scientific methods and objective observation (see “Science and the Changing Worldview,” page 756). Then, as now, the Dutch were major growers and exporters of flowers, especially the tulips that appear in nearly every flower piece in dozens of exquisite variations. The Dutch tradition of flower painting peaked in the long career of Rachel Ruysch (1664–1750)

From the mid-sixteenth through the seventeenth centuries, new discoveries about the natural world brought a sense of both the grand scale and the microscopic detail of the universe. To publish their theories and research, early scientists learned to draw or depended on artists to draw what they discovered in the world around them. This practice would continue until the invention of photography in the nineteenth century.

Artist and scientist were seldom the same person, but Anna Maria Sibylla Merian (1647–1717) contributed to botany and entomology both as a researcher and as an artist. German by birth and Dutch by training, Merian was once described by a Dutch contemporary as a painter of worms, flies, mosquitoes, spiders, “and other filth.” In 1699, the city of Amsterdam subsidized Merian’s research on plants and insects in the Dutch colony of Surinam in South America, where she spent two years exploring the jungle and recording insects. On her return to the Dutch Republic, she published the results of her research as **THE METAMORPHOSIS OF THE INSECTS OF SURINAM**, illustrated with 72 large plates engraved after her watercolors (FIG. 23–46). For all her meticulous scientific accuracy, Merian carefully arranged her depictions of exotic insects and elegant fruits and flowers into skillful and harmonious compositions.

But interest in scientific exploration was not limited to the Netherlands. The writings of philosophers Francis Bacon (1561–1626) in England and René Descartes (1596–1650) in France helped establish a new scientific method of studying the world by insisting on scrupulous objectivity and logical reasoning. Bacon argued that the facts be established from observation and tested by controlled experiments. Descartes, who was also a mathematician, argued for the deductive method of reasoning, in which conclusions were arrived at logically from basic premises.

In 1543, the Polish scholar Nicolaus Copernicus (1473–1543) published *On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres*, which contradicted the long-held view that the Earth is the center of the universe (the Ptolemaic theory) by arguing instead that it and the other planets revolve around the sun. The Church put Copernicus’s work on its *Index of Prohibited Books* in 1616, but Johannes Kepler (1571–1630) continued demonstrating that the planets revolve around the sun in elliptical orbits. Galileo Galilei (1564–1642), an astronomer, mathematician, and physicist, developed the telescope as a tool for observing the heavens and provided further confirmation of Copernican theory but since the Church prohibited its teaching, Galileo was tried for heresy by the Inquisition and forced to recant his views.

The new seventeenth-century science turned to the study of the very small as well as to the vast reaches of space. This included the

development of the microscope by the Dutch lens-maker and amateur scientist Anton van Leeuwenhoek (1632–1723). Leeuwenhoek perfected grinding techniques and increased the power of his lenses far beyond what was required for a simple magnifying glass. Ultimately, he was able to study the inner workings of plants and animals and even see micro-organisms.



23–46 • Anna Maria Sibylla Merian PLATE 9 FROM THE METAMORPHOSIS OF THE INSECTS OF SURINAM
1719. Hand-colored engraving, 18 $\frac{7}{8}$ " × 13" (47.9 × 33 cm). National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, DC. Gift of Wallace and Wilhelmina Holladay Collection, funds contributed by Mr. and Mrs. George G. Anderman and an anonymous donor (1976.56)

of Amsterdam. Her flower pieces were highly prized for their sensitive, free-form arrangements and their unusual and beautiful color harmonies. During her 70-year career, she became one of the most sought-after and highest-paid still-life painters in Europe—her paintings brought in twice what Rembrandt’s did.

In her **FLOWER STILL LIFE** (FIG. 23–47), painted shortly after the end of the century, Ruysch placed the container at the

center of the canvas’s width, then created an asymmetrical floral arrangement of pale oranges, pinks, and yellows rising from lower left to top right of the picture, offset by the strong diagonal of the tabletop. To further balance the painting, she placed highlighted blossoms and leaves on the dark left half of the canvas and silhouetted them against the light wall area on the right. Ruysch often emphasized the beauty of curving flower stems and enlivened her



23-47 • Rachel Ruysch FLOWER STILL LIFE

After 1700. Oil on canvas, 30" × 24" (76.2 × 61 cm). The Toledo Museum of Art, Ohio. Purchased with funds from the Libbey Endowment. Gift of Edward Drummond Libbey (1956.57)

compositions with interesting additions, such as casually placed pieces of fruit or insects, in this case a large gray moth (lower left) and two snail shells.

Flower painting was almost never a straightforward depiction of actual fresh flowers. Instead, artists made color sketches of fresh examples of each type of flower and studied scientifically accurate color illustrations in botanical publications. In the studio, using their sketches and notebooks, they would compose bouquets of perfect specimens of a variety of flowers that could never be found blooming at the same time. The short life of flowers was a poignant reminder of the fleeting nature of beauty and of human life.

FRANCE

Early seventeenth-century France was marked by almost continuous foreign and civil wars. The assassination of King Henry IV in 1610 left France in the hands of the queen, Marie de' Medici

(regency 1610–1617; see FIG. 23-27), as regent for her 9-year-old son, Louis XIII (r. 1610–1643). When Louis came of age, the brilliant and unscrupulous Cardinal Richelieu became chief minister and set about increasing the power of the crown at the expense of the French nobility. The death of Louis XIII again left France with a child king, the 5-year-old Louis XIV (r. 1643–1715). His mother, Anne of Austria, became regent, with the assistance of another powerful minister, Cardinal Mazarin. At Mazarin's death in 1661, Louis XIV began his long personal reign, assisted by yet another able minister, Jean-Baptiste Colbert.

An absolute monarch whose reign was the longest in European history, Louis XIV made the French court the envy of every ruler in Europe. He became known as *le Roi Soleil* ("the Sun King") and was sometimes glorified in art through identification with the Classical sun god, Apollo. In a 1701 portrait by court painter Hyacinthe Rigaud (1659–1743), the richly costumed **LOUIS XIV** is framed by a lavish, billowing curtain (FIG. 23-48). Proudly showing off his elegant legs, the 63-year-old monarch poses in a blue robe of state, trimmed with gold *fleurs-de-lis* and lined with white ermine. He wears the high-heeled shoes he devised to compensate for his shortness. Despite his pompous pose and magnificent surroundings, the directness of the king's gaze and the frankness of his aging face make him appear surprisingly human.

The arts, like everything else, came under royal control. In 1635, Cardinal Richelieu had founded the French Royal Academy, directing the members to compile a definitive dictionary and grammar of the French language. In 1648, the Royal Academy



23-48 • Hyacinthe Rigaud
LOUIS XIV
 1701. Oil on canvas, 9'2" × 7'10³/₄" (2.19 × 2.4 m). Musée du Louvre, Paris.

Louis XIV had ordered this portrait as a gift for his grandson, the future Philip V of Spain (r. 1700–1746), but when Rigaud finished the painting, Louis liked it too much to give it away and only three years later ordered a copy from Rigaud to give to his grandson. The request for copies of royal portraits was not unusual since the aristocratic families of Europe were linked through marriage. Paintings made appropriate gifts and at the same time memorialized important political alliances by recording them in visual form.

 **View** the Closer
 Look for *Louis XIV* on
myartslab.com

of Painting and Sculpture was founded, which, as reorganized by Colbert in 1663, maintained strict control over the arts (see “Grading the Old Masters,” page 763). Although it was not the first European arts academy, none before it had exerted such dictatorial authority—an authority that lasted in France until the late nineteenth century. Membership of the academy assured an artist of royal and civic commissions and financial success, but many talented artists did well outside it.

ARCHITECTURE AND ITS DECORATION AT VERSAILLES

French architecture developed along Classical lines in the second half of the seventeenth century under the influence of François Mansart (1598–1666) and Louis Le Vau (1612–1670). When the Royal Academy of Architecture was founded in 1671, its members developed guidelines for architectural design based on the belief that mathematics was the true basis of beauty. Their

chief sources for ideal models were the books of Vitruvius and Palladio.

In 1668, Louis XIV began to enlarge the small château built by Louis XIII at Versailles, not far from Paris. Louis moved to the palace in 1682 and eventually required his court to live in Versailles; 5,000 aristocrats lived in the palace itself, together with 14,000 servants and military staff members. The town had another 30,000 residents, most of whom were royal employees. The designers of the palace and park complex at Versailles were Le Vau, Charles Le Brun (1619–1690), who oversaw the interior decoration, and André Le Nôtre (1613–1700), who planned the gardens (see “Garden Design,” page 761). For both political and sentimental reasons, the old château was left standing, and the new building went up around it. This project consisted of two phases: the first additions by Le Vau, begun in 1668; and an enlargement completed after Le Vau’s death by his successor, Jules Hardouin-Mansart (1646–1708), from 1670 to 1685.

Hardouin-Mansart was responsible for the addition of the long lateral wings and the renovation of Le Vau’s central block on the garden side to match these wings (FIG. 23–49). The three-story façade has a lightly rusticated ground floor, a main floor lined with enormous arched windows separated by Ionic columns or pilasters, an attic level whose rectangular windows are also flanked by

pilasters, and a flat, terraced roof. The overall design is a sensitive balance of horizontals and verticals relieved by a restrained overlay of regularly spaced projecting blocks with open, colonnaded porches.

In his renovation of Le Vau’s center-block façade, Hardouin-Mansart enclosed the previously open gallery on the main level, creating the famed **HALL OF MIRRORS** (FIG. 23–50), which is about 240 feet (73 meters) long and 47 feet (13 meters) high. He achieved architectural symmetry and a sense of both splendor and expansiveness by lining the interior wall with Venetian glass mirrors, matching in size and shape the arched windows in the opposing wall. Mirrors were small and extremely expensive in the seventeenth century, and these huge walls of reflective glass were created by fitting 18-inch panels together. They reflect the natural light from the windows and give the impression of an even larger space; at night, the reflections of flickering candles must have turned the mirrored gallery into a shimmering tableau in which the king and courtiers saw themselves as they promenaded.

Inspired by Carracci’s Farnese ceiling (see FIG. 23–8), Le Brun decorated the vaulted ceiling with paintings on canvas (more stable in the damp northern climate) glorifying the reign and military triumphs of Louis XIV, accompanied by Classical gods. In 1642, Le Brun had studied in Italy, where he came under the influence



23–49 • Louis Le Vau and Jules Hardouin-Mansart GARDEN FAÇADE OF THE PALACE OF VERSAILLES
1678–1685. Foreground: Jean-Baptiste Tuby *Neptune*.

 **Watch** a video about Versailles on myartslab.com



23-50 • Jules Hardouin-Mansart and Charles Le Brun HALL OF MIRRORS, PALACE OF VERSAILLES
 Begun 1678. Length approx. 240' (73 m).

In the seventeenth century, mirrors and clear window glass were enormously expensive. To furnish the Hall of Mirrors, hundreds of glass panels of manageable size had to be assembled into the proper shape and attached to one another with glazing bars, which became part of the decorative pattern of the vast room.

of the Classical style of his compatriot Nicolas Poussin. As “first painter to the king” and director of the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture, Le Brun controlled art education and patronage from 1661/63 until his death in 1690. He tempered the warmly exuberant Baroque ceilings he had seen in Rome with Poussin’s cool Classicism. The underlying theme for his design and decoration of Versailles was the glorification of the king as Apollo the sun god, with whom Louis identified. Louis XIV thought of the duties of kingship, including its pageantry, as a solemn performance, so it is most appropriate that Rigaud’s portrait presents him on a raised, stagelike platform, with a theatrical curtain (see FIG. 23-48). Versailles became the splendid stage on which the king played the principal role in the grandiose drama of state.

PAINTING

Sixteenth-century French Mannerism began to give way in the 1620s to Classicism and the impact of Caravaggio, especially his

tenebrism and compression of large-scale figures into the foreground. As the century progressed, the control of the Royal Academy and its encouragement of studies of the Classics and the surviving antiquities in Rome, guided French painting toward the Classicism propounded by Le Brun.

CARAVAGGIO’S INFLUENCE: GEORGES DE LA TOUR AND THE LE NAIN BROTHERS One of Caravaggio’s most important followers in France, Georges de La Tour (1593–1652) received major royal and ducal commissions and became court painter to Louis XIII in 1639. La Tour may have traveled to Italy in 1614–1616, and in the 1620s he almost certainly visited the Netherlands, where Caravaggio’s style was having an impact (see FIG. 23-30). Like Caravaggio, La Tour filled the foreground of his compositions with imposing figures, but in place of Caravaggio’s focus on descriptive detail, La Tour’s work revels in the dramatic effects of lighting, usually from sources within the paintings

Wealthy and aristocratic French landowners commissioned garden designers to transform their large properties into gardens extending over many acres. The challenge for garden designers was to unify diverse elements—buildings, pools, monuments, plantings, natural land formations—into a coherent whole. At Versailles, André Le Nôtre imposed order upon the vast expanses of palace gardens and park by using broad, straight avenues radiating from a series of round focal points (FIG. 23-51). He succeeded so thoroughly that his plan inspired generations of urban designers as well as landscape architects.

In Le Nôtre's hands, the palace terrain became an extraordinary work of art and a visual delight for its inhabitants. Neatly contained expanses of lawn and broad, straight vistas seemed to stretch to the horizon, while the formal gardens became an exercise in precise geometry. The gardens at Versailles are classically harmonious in their symmetrical, geometric design but Baroque in their vast size and extension into the surrounding countryside, where the gardens thickened into woods cut by straight avenues.

The most formal gardens lay nearest the palace, and plantings became progressively less elaborate and larger in scale as their distance from the palace increased. Broad, intersecting paths separated reflecting

pools and planting beds, which are called embroidered **parterres** for their colorful patterns of flowers outlined with trimmed hedges. After the formal zone of parterres came lawns, large fountains on terraces, and trees planted in thickets to conceal features such as an open-air ballroom and a colonnade. Statues carved by at least 70 sculptors also adorned the park. A mile-long canal, crossed by a second canal nearly as large, marked the main axis of the garden. Fourteen waterwheels brought the water from the river to supply the canals and the park's 1,400 fountains. Only the fountains near the palace played all day; the others were turned on only when the king approached.

At the north of the secondary canal, a smaller pavilion-palace, the Trianon, was built in 1669. To satisfy the king's love of flowers year-round, the gardens of the Trianon were bedded out with blooming plants from the south, shipped in by the French navy. Even in midwinter, the king and his guests could stroll through a summer garden. The head gardener is said to have had nearly 2 million flowerpots at his disposal. In the eighteenth century, Louis XV added greenhouses and a botanical garden. The facilities of the fruit and vegetable garden that supplied the palace in 1677–1683 today house the National School of Horticulture.



23-51 • Louis Le Vau and André Le Nôtre PLAN OF THE GARDENS OF THE PALACE OF VERSAILLES
Versailles, France. c. 1661–1785.



23-52 • Georges de La Tour MARY MAGDALEN WITH THE SMOKING FLAME

c. 1640. Oil on canvas, 46 $\frac{1}{4}$ " \times 36 $\frac{1}{8}$ "
(117 \times 91.8 cm). Los Angeles County Museum of Art.
Gift of the Ahmanson Foundation (M. 77.73)

themselves. Often, it seems, light is his real subject (see Introduction, "A Closer Look," page xxx fig. B).

La Tour painted many images of Mary Magdalen. In **MARY MAGDALEN WITH THE SMOKING FLAME** (fig. 23-52), as in many of his other paintings, the light emanates from an internal source, in this case the flame from an oil lamp. Its warm glow gently brushes over hand and skull—symbol of mortality—to establish the foreground. The compression of the figure into the front of the pictorial space lends a sense of intimacy to the saint's relationship with viewers, although the Magdalen is completely unaware of our presence. Light not only unifies the painting; its controlled character creates its somber mood. Mary Magdalen has put aside her rich clothing and jewels to meditate on the frailty and vanity of human life. Even the flickering light that rivets our attention on her meditative face and gesture is of limited duration.

This same feeling of timelessness, and a comparable interest in effects of light, characterize the



23-53 • Louis or Antoine Le Nain A PEASANT FAMILY IN AN INTERIOR

c. 1640. Oil on canvas, 44 $\frac{1}{2}$ " \times 62 $\frac{1}{2}$ " (1.13 \times 1.59 m).
Musée du Louvre, Paris.

The members of the French Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture considered ancient Classical art to be the standard by which contemporary art should be judged. By the 1680s, however, younger artists of the academy began to argue that modern art might equal, or might even surpass, the art of the ancients—a radical thought that sparked controversy.

A debate arose over the relative merits of drawing and color in painting. The conservatives argued that drawing was superior to color because drawing appealed to the mind while color appealed to the senses. They saw Nicolas Poussin as embodying perfectly the Classical principles of subject and design. But the young artists who admired the vivid colors of Titian, Veronese, and Rubens claimed that painting should deceive the eye, and since color achieves this deception more convincingly than drawing, application of color should be valued over drawing. Adherents of the two positions were called *poussinistes* (in honor of Poussin) and *rubénistes* (for Rubens).

paintings of the Le Nain brothers, Antoine (c. 1588–1648), Louis (c. 1593–1648), and Mathieu (1607–1677). Although all three were working in Paris by about 1630 and were founding members of the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture in 1648, little else is known about their lives and careers. Because they collaborated closely with each other, art historians have only recently begun to sort out their individual styles. They are best known for their painting of genre scenes in which French peasants pause from honest labor for quiet family diversions. **A PEASANT FAMILY IN AN INTERIOR (FIG. 23-53)** of about 1640, probably by Louis Le Nain, is the largest, and one of the most lyrical, of these noble scenes of peasant life. Three generations of this family are gathered around a table. The adults acknowledge our presence—a spotlighted woman at left even seems to offer us some wine—whereas the children remain lost in their dreams or focused on their play. The casualness of costume and deportment is underlined by the foreground clutter of pets and kitchen equipment. It is only after we survey the frieze of figures illuminated around the table that the painting reveals one of its most extraordinary passages—a boy in the left background, warming himself in front of a fireplace and represented only as a dark silhouette from behind, edged by the soft golden firelight. Why the brothers chose to paint these peasant families, and who bought their paintings, are questions still unresolved.

THE CLASSICAL LANDSCAPE: POUSSIN AND CLAUDE LORRAIN French painters Nicolas Poussin (1594–1665) and Claude Gellée (called “Claude Lorrain” or simply “Claude,” 1600–1682) pursued their careers in Italy although they usually worked for French patrons. They perfected the French ideal of the “Classical” landscape and profoundly influenced painters for the next two centuries. We refer to Poussin and Claude as

The portrait painter and critic Roger de Piles (1635–1709) took up the cause of the *rubénistes* in a series of pamphlets. In *The Principles of Painting*, de Piles evaluated the most important painters on a scale of 0 to 20 in four categories. He gave no score higher than 72 (18 in each category), since no mortal artist could achieve perfection. Caravaggio received a 0 in expression and a 6 in drawing, while Michelangelo and Leonardo both got a 4 in color and Rembrandt a 6 in drawing.

Most of the painters examined here do not do very well. Raphael and Rubens get 65 points (A on our grading scale), Van Dyck comes close with 55 (C+). Poussin and Titian earn 53 and 51 (solid Cs), while Rembrandt slips by with 50 (C–). Leonardo da Vinci gets 49 (D), and Michelangelo and Dürer with 37 and Caravaggio with 28 are resounding failures in de Piles’s view. Tastes change. Someday our own ideas may seem just as misguided as those of the academicians.

Classicists because they organized natural elements and figures into gently illuminated, idealized compositions. Both were influenced by Annibale Carracci and to some extent by Venetian painting, yet each evolved an unmistakably personal style that conveyed an entirely different mood from that of their sources and from each other.

Nicolas Poussin was born in Normandy but settled in Paris, where his initial career as a painter was unremarkable. He arrived in Rome, and the Barberini family became his foremost patrons. Bernini considered Poussin one of the greatest painters in Rome, and others clearly agreed. In 1639, Giovanni Maria Roscioli, secretary to Pope Urban VIII, commissioned from Poussin two large paintings showing the evangelists John and Matthew composing their texts within expansive landscapes dotted with Classical buildings and antique ruins (**FIGS. 23-54, 23-55**). The paintings were completed by October 1640, just before Poussin left for two years in Paris to work for Louis XIII. Perhaps they were the first installment of a set of four evangelists within landscapes, but only these two had been painted when the patron died in 1644.

These paintings epitomize and are among the earliest examples of a new style of rigorously ordered and highly idealized Classical landscapes with figures—an artistic theme and format created by Poussin that would have a long history in European painting. Although individually composed to create an ordered whole on its own, the paintings were designed as a pair. The large clumps of trees at the outside edges form “bookends” that bring lateral closure to the broad panorama that stretches across both canvases. Their unity is emphasized by the evangelists’ postures, turned inward toward each other, and solidified at the lower inside corners where huge blocks of Classical masonry converge from both pictures as coordinated remains of the same ruined monument. A consistent perspective progression in both pictures moves



23-54 • Nicolas Poussin LANDSCAPE WITH ST. MATTHEW AND THE ANGEL
1639–1640. Oil on canvas, 39" × 53½" (99 × 135 cm). Staatliche Museen, Berlin.

from the picture plane back into the distance through a clearly defined foreground, middle ground, and background, illuminated by an even light with gentle shadows and highlights. In the middle distance, behind St. John, are a ruined temple and an obelisk; the round building in the distant city is Hadrian's Tomb, which Poussin knew from Rome. Precisely placed trees, hills, mountains, water, and even clouds take on a solidity of form that seems almost as structural as this architecture. The subject of Poussin's paintings is not the writing evangelists but the balance and order of nature.


When Claude Lorrain went to Rome in 1613, he first studied with Agostino Tassi, an assistant of Guercino and a specialist in architectural painting. Claude, however, preferred landscape. He sketched outdoors for days at a time, then returned to his studio to compose paintings. Claude was fascinated with light, and his works are often studies of the effect of the rising or setting sun on colors and the atmosphere. A favorite and much-imitated device was to place one or two large objects in the foreground—a tree, building, a figural group, or hill—past which the viewer's eye enters the scene and proceeds, often by diagonal paths, into the distance.

Claude used this compositional device to great effect in paintings such as **A PASTORAL LANDSCAPE** of the late 1640s (**FIG. 23-56**). Instead of balancing symmetrically placed elements in a statement of stable order, Claude leads his viewers actively into the painting in a continuing, zigzagging fashion. A conversing couple frames the composition at the right. Their gestures and the ambling of the cows they are tending lead our attention toward the left on a slightly rising diagonal, where a bridge and the traveler moving across it establish a middle ground. Across the bridge into the distance is a city, setting up a contrast between the warm, soft contours of the pastoral right foreground and the misty angularity of the fortified walls and blocks composing the distant fortress. More distant still are the hazy outlines of hills that seem to take this space into infinity. The picture evokes a city dweller's nostalgia and longing for the simpler and more sensuous life of the country, and it is easy to imagine the foreground shepherd extolling to his companion the superior virtues of their own life in contrast to that in the city, toward which he gestures to underline his point.



23-55 • Nicolas Poussin
LANDSCAPE WITH ST.
JOHN ON PATMOS

1640. Oil on canvas, $39\frac{1}{2}'' \times 53\frac{5}{8}''$ (100.3 × 136.4 cm). The Art Institute of Chicago. A.A. Munger Collection (1930.500)

 **Read** the document related to Nicolas Poussin on myartslab.com

23-56 • Claude Lorrain
A PASTORAL LANDSCAPE

c. 1648. Oil on copper, $15\frac{1}{2}'' \times 21''$ (39.3 × 53.3 cm). Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Connecticut. Leonard C. Hanna, Jr., B.A. 1913, Fund (1959.47)





23-57 • Inigo Jones BANQUETING HOUSE, WHITEHALL PALACE
London. 1619–1622.

ENGLAND

England and Scotland were joined in 1603 with the ascent to the English throne of James VI of Scotland, who reigned over Great Britain as James I (r. 1603–1625). James increased royal patronage of British artists, especially in literature and architecture. William Shakespeare wrote *Macbeth*, featuring the king's legendary ancestor Banquo, in tribute to the new royal family, and the play was performed at court in December 1606.

Although James's son Charles I was an important collector and patron of painting, religious and political tensions that erupted into civil war cost Charles his throne and his life in 1649. A succession of republican and monarchical rulers who alternately supported Protestantism or Catholicism followed, until the Catholic king James II was deposed in the Glorious Revolution of 1689 by his Protestant son-in-law and daughter, William and Mary. After Mary's death in 1694, William (the Dutch great-grandson of William of Orange, who had led the Netherlands' independence movement) ruled on his own until his death in 1702. He was succeeded by Mary's sister, Anne (r. 1702–1714).

ARCHITECTURE

In sculpture and painting, the English court favored foreign artists. The field of architecture, however, was dominated in the seventeenth century by the Englishmen Inigo Jones, Christopher Wren, and Nicholas Hawksmoor. They replaced the country's long-lived Gothic style with Classicism.

INIGO JONES In the early seventeenth century, Inigo Jones (1573–1652) introduced his version of Renaissance Classicism—based on the style of Italian architect Andrea Palladio—into England. Jones had studied Palladio's work in Venice, and he filled his copy of Palladio's *Four Books of Architecture*—still preserved—with notes. Appointed surveyor-general in 1615, Jones was commissioned to design the Queen's House in Greenwich and the Banqueting House for the royal palace of Whitehall.

The **BANQUETING HOUSE** (FIG. 23-57), built in 1619–1622 to replace an earlier hall destroyed by fire, was used for court ceremonies and entertainments such as the popular masques—stylized dramas combining theater, music, and dance in spectacles



23-58 • INTERIOR, BANQUETING HOUSE, WHITEHALL PALACE

Ceiling paintings of the apotheosis of King James and the glorification of the Stuart monarchy by Peter Paul Rubens. 1630–1635.

by a balcony, with antechambers at each end. Ionic columns and pilasters suggest a colonnade but do not impinge on the ideal, double-cube space, which measures 55 feet in width by 110 feet in length by 55 feet in height. In 1630, Charles I commissioned Peter Paul Rubens—who was in England on a peace mission—to decorate the ceiling. Jones had divided the flat ceiling into nine compartments, for which Rubens painted canvases glorifying the reign of James I. Installed in 1635, the central oval shows the triumph of the Stuart dynasty with the king carried to heaven on clouds of glory. The large rectangular panel beyond it depicts the birth of the new nation, flanked by allegorical paintings of heroic strength and virtue overcoming vice. In the long paintings alongside the oval, *putti* holding the fruits of the earth symbolize the peace and prosperity of England and Scotland under Stuart rule. So proud was Charles of the result that, rather than allow the smoke of candles and torches to harm the ceiling decoration, he moved evening entertainments to an adjacent pavilion.

performed by professional actors, courtiers, and even members of the royal family itself. The west front, shown here, consisting of what appears to be two upper stories with superimposed Ionic and Composite orders raised over a plain basement level, exemplifies the understated elegance of Jones's interpretation of Palladian design. Pilasters flank the end bays, and engaged columns subtly emphasize the three bays at the center, a disposition repeated in the balustrade along the roofline. A rhythmic effect results from varying window treatments—triangular and segmental (semicircular) pediments on the first level, cornices with volute (scroll-form) brackets on the second. The sculpted garlands just below the roofline add an unexpected decorative touch.

Although the exterior suggests two stories, the interior of the Banqueting House (FIG. 23-58) is actually one large hall divided

CHRISTOPHER WREN After Jones's death, English architecture was dominated by Christopher Wren (1632–1723) who began his professional career in 1659 as a professor of astronomy. For Wren, architecture was a sideline until 1665, when he traveled to France to further his education. While there, he met with French architects and with Bernini, who was in Paris to consult on designs for the Louvre. Wren returned to England with architecture books, engravings, and a greatly increased admiration for French Classical Baroque design. In 1669, he was made surveyor-general, the position once held by Inigo Jones, and in 1673, he was knighted.

After the Great Fire of 1666 destroyed large parts of central London, Wren was continuously involved in rebuilding the city, including more than 50 churches. His major project from 1675

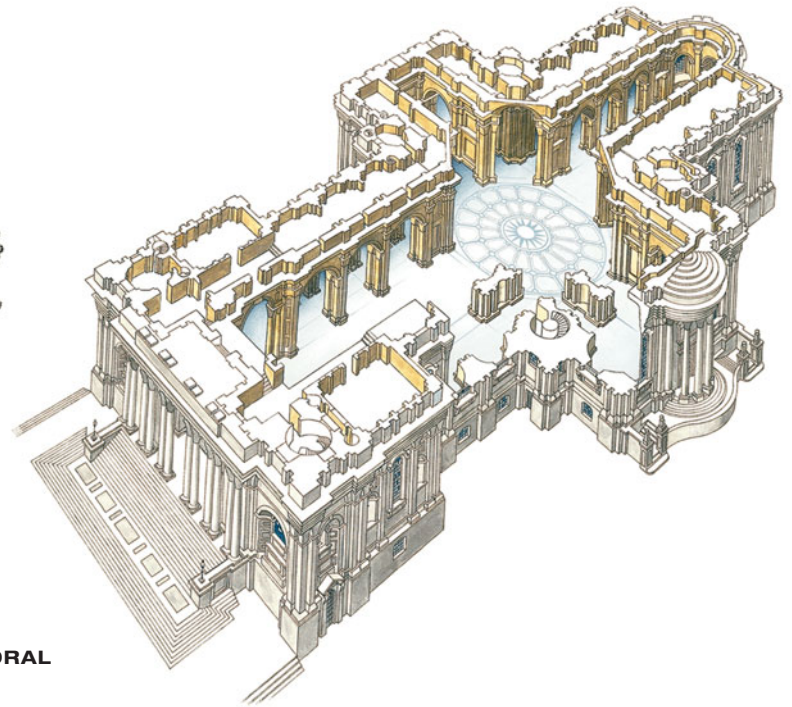


23-59 • Christopher Wren FAÇADE OF ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL, LONDON
Designed 1673, built 1675–1710.

 [Read](#) the document related to Christopher Wren on myartslab.com

to 1710, was the rebuilding of **ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL** (Figs. 23-59, 23-60). Attempts to salvage the burned-out Gothic church on the site failed, and a new cathedral was needed. Wren's famous second design for St. Paul's (which survives in the so-called "Great Model" of 1672–1673) was for a centrally planned building with a great dome in the manner of Bramante's original plan for St.

Peter's. This was rejected, but Wren ultimately succeeded both in reconciling Reformation tastes for a basilica and the unity inherent in the use of a dome. St. Paul's has a long nave and equally long sanctuary articulated by small, domed bays. Semicircular, colonnaded porticos open into short transepts that compress themselves against the crossing, where the dome rises 633 feet



23-60 • SCHEMATIC DRAWING OF ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL

from ground level. Wren's dome has an interior masonry vault with an oculus and an exterior sheathing of lead-covered wood, but also has a brick cone rising from the inner oculus to support a tall lantern. The ingenuity of the design and engineering remind us that Wren had been a mathematician and professor of astronomy at Oxford. The columns surrounding the drum on the exterior recall Bramante's Tempietto in Rome (see FIG. 21-19), although Wren never went to Italy and knew Italian architecture only from books.

On the façade of St. Paul's (see FIG. 23-59), two levels of paired Corinthian columns support a carved pediment. The deep-set porticos and columned pavilions atop the towers create dramatic areas of light and shadow. Not only the huge size of the cathedral, but also its triumphant verticality, complexity of form, and *chiaroscuro* effects, make it a major monument of English architecture. Wren recognized the importance of the building. On the simple marble slab that forms his tomb in the crypt of the cathedral, he had engraved: "If you want to see his memorial, look around you."

THINK ABOUT IT

- 23.1** Discuss how Bernini and Caravaggio established the Baroque style in sculpture and painting respectively. Locate the defining traits of the period style in at least one work from the chapter by each of these artists.
- 23.2** Discuss the development of portraiture, still life, and genre painting in the Dutch Republic during the seventeenth century. What accounts for the increased importance of these subjects at this time?
- 23.3** Choose two paintings of monarchs in this chapter and explain how the artists who painted them embodied the ruler's prestige and power. Are the strategies of these painters different from those employed by painters of powerful people in the sixteenth century?
- 23.4** Determine how Poussin's landscapes depart from other stylistic currents at the time. What is meant by the term "Classicism" in relation to Poussin's style? Comment on its importance for the future of French art.

CROSSCURRENTS



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FIG. 23-15

These two works visualize the same religious theme—the Last Judgment. But they are placed in different locations within their buildings, engaging different audiences in distinct ways. How do these works represent the cultural goals and stylistic systems of their time and place? Do they have anything other than their subject in common?

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